



Down, down floated the ice raft. Page 250.

THE
ICE RAFT.

By
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AUTHOR OF "A MERE PIECE OF MISCHIEF; OR, AMIEL'S
TROUBLES," "THE NEW BOY."

PHILADELPHIA:
ALFRED MARTIEN,
1214 CHESTNUT STREET.
1871.

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ALFRED MARTIEN,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

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THE ICE RAFT.

CHAPTER I.

A HARD LESSON.

WELL, I can't make head or tail of it! So, there, now!" and Dick Monroe's Cæsar went down on the table with a bang that loosened the only remaining cover of that much abused volume.

"But, Dick, I am sure you can translate that passage if you only try, after what I have told you, and with the notes,

too," said his sister, whose patience Dick had kept on the full strain the whole morning.

"I didn't understand a word of what you said," snapped Master Dick; and he spoke the truth, for he had resolutely refused his attention during the whole explanation in one of those extraordinary spasms of perversity, to which boys and girls of his sort are subject.

"O, Dick!" cried Diana, "why, Anne made it as plain—as—as plain loaf-cake."

"O! of course *you* understand it," sneered Dick. "What a fortunate being I am to have two such learned sisters. Of course we all know *you* can read Cæsar without the lexicon."

"No I can't," said the literal Diana. "I have to look for ever so many words; but that sentence is easy; I've got it all out, and I'll show you if you like."

"You show me, indeed!" retorted Dick, scornfully. "A likely story, you've got it out right and I hav'nt."

It was a very likely story, for Diana was eager to learn and attentive, and Dick was careless and perverse; and, as a natural consequence, he was often in the wrong when his sister was right. But, though such was the case at least three times a week, Dick was firmly convinced that he was immensely Diana's superior, by virtue of his two years' seniority.

"But I'm sure I am right," persisted Diana; "and, if I'm not, maybe you can say where I'm wrong."

"It's not your business to teach me," said Dick, growing crosser and crosser.

"Do let Diana look it over with you, dear," said patient, long-suffering Anne, exercising much more forbearance than



Dick deserved. "I must go now, for I promised aunt to write some letters for her in time for the afternoon mail. I am sure a little thought will show you, and I have translated it for you once."

"I don't believe you had it right," muttered Dick, obstinately, to himself; but he condescended, ungraciously enough, to let Diana reopen the Cæsar, and begin to translate the passage over which he had worried and fretted for the last half-hour, rather enjoying the time himself, but teasing Anne till she was just ready to cry.

"When he had gone forward or marched," began Diana.

"I'd like to know how you make 'when'?" said Dick, scornfully.

"Why, 'cum,' of course."

"Just as if I didn't know it meant 'with.'"

“It means ‘when,’ too,” asserted Diana, “only sometimes they write it with a —— Why, Dick, you know it does.”

“I don’t care, I don’t believe it,” persisted Dick; though he had seen the moment after speaking that Diana was right.

“Look in the lexicon then for yourself.”

Dick took the lexicon and began to pore over it, as if in intense study. “Why look here, Di,” he said suddenly, as if making a discovery; “it means by the time he had gone forward, when he had——”

“That’s just what I said.”

“I didn’t understand you,” said Dick, who would have missed his lesson ten times over, rather than confess that he was indebted to his sister for an idea. “You said it meant, ‘with’——”



“O, Dick! what a story!” said Diana, laughing; “but never mind. Go on.”

“Go on yourself,” answered Dick shortly, staring out of the window at the old red cow in the field opposite, and then lazily glancing at his book.

“It was told to him that Arioustus with all his forces——”

“There! I said you called ‘cum’ ‘with’,” cried Dick triumphantly.

“But it does mean ‘with’ there,” said Diana.

“If it means ‘with’ there, then it does in the other place, too,” persisted Dick, changing his base with rapidity.

“Didn’t you just look it up yourself in the lexicon?” said Diana.

“Yes, and didn’t it mean ‘when’?” answered Dick. “So there now!”

“I declare Dick you are too bad,” cried Diana, indignantly. “I should think you

— and then —
would feel ashamed to waste your time so uselessly." This was an uncommonly severe speech for Diana, who was not apt to take offence or to give it.

"Well, you puzzle me so, saying sometimes one thing, and then another, I can't tell what you mean at all. I wish I could go to school to a *man* that knew Latin *thoroughly*," said Dick, beginning his speech with a whine, and ending it in self-consequence.

"I'm sure I wish you could for Anne's sake," answered Diana, regaining her good humor in some measure; "but if you went on at school is you do at home you'd catch it, I know. Why John Graham told me that Mr. Lyon in the academy wouldn't stand anything."

"I should be with my equals there at any rate," said Dick loftily.

"I dare say," said Diana provoked.

“John told me there was a boy there who translated ‘cum omnibus copiis,’ ‘with all his forces in an omnibus.’”

“You needn’t *help* me any more, Miss Di,” said Dick, who, like most “teases,” could not bear a word himself, and was seriously angry. “I’ll do my own lesson, thank you.”

“O, come, now!” coaxed Diana; “don’t be put out—I didn’t mean any harm.”

“I don’t choose to be insulted,” replied Dick, with what was meant for majesty, but had the air of sulks.

“Nonsense! Come, let’s read it over together. It’s real interesting here.”

“Interesting!” sneered Dick. “I’m sure I don’t see the interest.”

“O, Dick! Why, he is telling his own story; and, when you think it is Julius Cæsar’s own self that is speaking, I love to read it only for that.”

“Absurd affectation! Really, Diana, your airs are intolerable!”

“Well, I *do* take an interest *in* it, Dick,” said Diana, humbly, and feeling herself rather a silly person for so doing. “I do so love stories about real, live people.”

“I read Latin for the mental discipline, and not for stories,” answered Dick, with an air of superiority. “Osborne Briggs says any one can be a glib reader.”

“It’s more than he is, then,” said Diana, “or you either,” she thought, but she wisely kept the thought to herself.

“He is a *thorough* scholar,” said Dick, growing more and more majestic. “He began his education in an English school.”

“He’s no great credit to it, any way,” replied Diana. “He’s at the bottom of his class in the academy. John told me so.”

“John is jealous of him.”

“What for, I wonder,” laughed Diana. “But come, Dick, don’t let’s contradict each other. Do go over this with me before Anne comes. She’s so tired.”

But Dick would not consent to accept his sister’s help; and, after a vain attempt to conciliate him, Diana put away her books and went to her practice.

On his sister’s return, Dick scolded and fretted and blundered through the chapter, which had formed his morning’s lesson, teasing poor Anne almost into a fit of crying, and taking a certain foolish pleasure in seeing her discomfort, and hearing the nervous quiver in her voice.

“Dear Dick,” said Anne, when the lesson was finally ended, “why do you like to tease me so?”

“If I don’t know Latin by instinct, I can’t help it,” said Dick, sulkily.

“But that is not the matter,” said Anne, gently. “You don’t try to learn, I am afraid.”

“If I don’t understand you, I can’t help that, either. You haven’t the right method of teaching,” replied the boy, with an injured air.

“Are you sure you have the right way of learning?”

“O dear! Anne, *don’t* lecture,” snapped Dick. “Of course I’m the worst boy in the world; of course everything’s all my fault. I’m sick and tired of it all. I do wish Will would send me to school. I’m sick of home and everything in it,” and Dick flung out of the room, banging the door behind him.

Anne laid her head on the desk and cried bitterly. She was not angry, this soft, long-suffering Anne, but she was hurt and wounded to the very heart.



“O dear! what shall I do!” she sobbed.
“It gets worse and worse, and nothing I
can say to him will be of any use.”

Anne was quite right. Dick had come
to that pass where things said to him had
no effect whatever, and when he stood in
great need of having something *done* to
him.





CHAPTER II.

A NEW HOME.

THE parents of Anne, Dick and Diana Monroe died some years before my story opened, leaving Dick and Diana to Anne's care and the guardianship of their elder brother, Major William Monroe of the United States Army.

Major Monroe and Anne were twin brother and sister, very much alike in appearance, and very unlike in character. Anne was patient, forbearing, sweet-tempered, almost to a fault, and the Major was said by those who knew him to be a man who would stand no nonsense.

Nevertheless his men liked him with all their hearts, and were ready to follow him to the death.

On the Western frontier, and among soldiers, that phrase has a real meaning. All unprotected women, children, and dogs appealed to him for help, and never in vain.

As for Anne her heart was bound up with her brother, and Diana and Dick believed that never since the days of Bayard and Sir Philip Sydney had there been such a hero as their Will.

The home of an officer in the United States cavalry service is said to be "all out West, and nowhere in particular," but the Major still called Darton, where he had been born, his home. There his sister Anne kept house in the homestead, with her younger brother and sister.

Darton was a college town, a quiet,

pleasant, sleepy comfortable old place in Central New York. The college buildings were three four-story factory-like erections of red brick, and one Grecian temple of the white pine order; but they were just as dear to the eyes of the alumni when they came back, as if they had been of the most modest of architecture. There were many gentlemen scattered from Maine to California who would have regretted to see the old houses replaced by the most elegant modern Gothic structures. There were arches and spires and pinnacles in the grand elms and oaks and maples that shaded the grounds, and if new colleges had been built some of the trees must have been removed to make room.

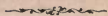
In Darton Mr. Monroe had been Professor of Ancient Languages. He had originally intended that his elder son

should some time hold a place in his beloved college, and had begun his education with that end in view. But William went to West Point, and it remained to educate Anne. He had taught her exactly as he would have taught his son, and she was a very good, classical scholar.

Dick, when a child, had been very sickly and delicate, too much so to go to school. He had learned when he could, and what he could; and, as he grew older, Anne still shrank from sending him "among other boys," of whom she was somewhat afraid.

Major Monroe was at home only at long intervals, and for a few weeks at a time, and his visits were holidays to the whole family.

He did not remember that his little brother was growing to be a big boy.



He had the greatest confidence in his sister's judgment, and was very proud of her acquirements.

Anne was so far from the popular idea of "a learned lady," that Diana said "the one aim of her life was to conceal the fact that she knew how to read." Nevertheless she was spoken of scornfully as "a blue," in consequence of which many people were afraid of her, though a more innocent feminine creature than Anne Monroe did not exist.

She had her own little society of those whose tastes were similar to her own, and for the most part she led a very calm, happy life.

Six months, however, before our story opens, the greater part of the Monroe property had gone in the wreck of a bank, where it had been placed just for

a few days, while the family lawyer was waiting to find a good investment.

There was left to them their large, handsome old house in Darton, about a hundred dollars a year, and Major Monroe's pay. The Major, fortunately, was at home on a flying visit when the crash came.

He and Anne together decided that they would not sell, but rent the house, and would find, for the present, some cheaper home.

In this state of affairs, however, their aunt, Mrs. Bland, wrote and asked them all to come to her. She had a large house about a mile from Menango, a handsome income, and she would take care of her brother's children. The offer of a home the Major accepted, but he would not let "his family" be dependent upon their aunt.



He insisted on paying their board at a rate which obliged him to wear his old clothes till they showed service, and to give up smoking, which was a good thing, and to deny himself many little luxuries to which he had been accustomed. Anne cried when her brother wore his old uniform instead of ordering a new one, and shed tears into his empty cigar box, which she put away as a precious relic, and thought her Will the most self-sacrificing of men and majors. She would hardly have been consoled had she known that Mrs. Bland regularly put away to the Major's credit the sum paid her for board, and that she, Diana and Dick were really having their cake, and eating it, too. It had been a cold, rainy day in March when the Monroes left the train at Menango. Anne looked about for her aunt, while the Major

collected the trunks. Mrs. Bland was no where to be seen, but a very tall and old colored man came forward and asked respectfully if this lady was Miss Monroe—saying that he had been sent with the carriage to meet the party.

The carriage was large, rather ancient and shabby, and drawn by a pair of white horses, who were too old and too fat to go more than four miles an hour.

“Can you drive a little faster?” said Major Monroe to Simeon.

“Laws, Massa!” replied Simeon, “these horses don’t ever go very fast; you see they and me’s growed old together. They’s fourteen years old them horses is,” said Simeon, with great satisfaction in his tone.

“I wonder if he’s fourteen,” whispered Diana to Dick, who exploded into a laugh, which Simeon caught.

“No, Missy, I’s sixty-four. I was all

through the last war, and was at New Orleans when they took the British, long with Captain Bland," said Simeon with pride.

Simeon liked to tell the story, and the Major liked to hear, which he had plenty of time to do as they jogged along. They passed through the streets of Menango, which were rather narrow and muddy; they crossed the long covered bridge over the river and turned eastward along its bank, until about a mile from the bridge, they came to Mrs. Bland's house. It was a large, old-fashioned dwelling of red brick, mellowed in its redness by time and weather, with faded green blinds, and a heavy porch over the door. In the open doorway stood Mrs. Bland, having come so far from the fire by a great exertion to meet her nephews and nieces. She was a pretty, plump old lady with soft curls of

grey hair inside her cap, and a soft grey dress and shawl. The major was shocked to find himself inwardly likening his aunt to a little, fat merino lamb, which he had seen at a county fair.

"You are welcome, dears," said Mrs. Bland in a soft tone, which brought the little lamb still more clearly to the Major's mind. "I haven't seen you since you were a year old, Will. Dear me! How you *have* grown."

This remark set off Diana and Dick into fits of half suppressed laughter, so that when brought forward to their aunt they were giggling disgracefully.

"Dear little things," said Mrs. Bland, kissing them affectionately. "This is Richard, and this is Diana. Why, Diana, my dear, you don't look at all like me, and yet you were named after me. It's very odd!" added Mrs. Bland, mildly.

“I thought your name was Sophy,” Diana managed to say with tolerable composure, while Dick grew suddenly sober in obedience to his brother’s glance. “That’s my second name, dear; Diana Sophonisba my mother called me. It was too long to use, so they called me Sophy.”

No one ever could have addressed Mrs. Bland as Diana. There was such utter incongruity between the name and the person, but Sophy exactly suited.

“And now go up-stairs, my dears, and take off your things,” said Mrs. Bland, leading them into the wide hall. “I told Patty to be sure and have good fires in all your rooms. Do you like a good fire, Anne, love?” asked Mrs. Bland.

“Very much, Aunt Sophy,” said Anne, who, while her parents were living, had made two or three visits to her aunt’s house.

"You are a great deal more like me than your sister," said Mrs. Bland, detaining her, and patting her hand softly. "A great deal more, because you are fair and have light hair, and Diana's is dark—and yet she was named after me, you know—it's very odd!"

"Diana is like her mother," said Anne.

"Ah, yes—and she was no relation to me. Perhaps that accounts for it," said Mrs. Bland, in a musing tone. "Shouldn't you think so, Will?"

"I should think it very likely," said the Major, gravely, whereupon Dick and Diana, who had paused on the landing-place, turned and fled swiftly up-stairs, and a sound came from above, as of two young people trying to choke themselves.

The Major and Anne followed them, and were met at the top of the stairs

by a very respectable-looking old colored woman, who showed the girls to their room, while a younger man—her son and Simeon's—attended the Major and Dick.

Primus was hardly out of the room before Dick's laugh exploded.

"Well, young man," said the Major, laughing himself, "what is that for?"

"She—she said you'd grown."

"Well! so I have. Most people do between one and thirty-one."

"And she seemed to think Di must look like her because she was named for her. Whatever could have made any one call her Diana! but Sophonisba just suits her."

"See here, Dick," said the Major; "aunt is as good and kind as she can be, and you must never laugh at her little ways; or, if you are amused some

times, keep it to yourself. If you ever laugh in the house, see that you never do out."

"Of course not."

"She has lived very much by herself, and in that way people usually get habits that seem singular to others. But, remember, I shall be very much displeased if you ever make what she says or does a subject of ridicule."

"Of course I won't, Will," said Dick, rather annoyed. "See what a nice big fire in the fireplace, and what a queer old room. Look at these funny curly-tailed monsters on the mantelpiece. Dragons with butterflies painted all over them."

"Never mind exploring your quarters now," said the Major. "Aunt will be waiting tea for us, and you will barely have time to get the cinders out of your hair."



CHAPTER III.

THE MAJOR AT HOME.

AFTER Will had gone and Anne had fairly become settled in her new home, it must be confessed that life to her became rather tiresome. Mrs. Bland's house, though perfectly comfortable, and in some respects luxurious, was a dull place. The whole place had a grey, faded look, not at all that of poverty; but carpets, and curtains, and paper had grown dim and dark together, and Mrs. Bland had never thought of renewing them. The two great parlors were shut up, and were only opened to be dusted and swept.

Mrs. Bland lived in a smaller back room, from which her bedroom opened, and kept the two at a temperature of about seventy-five degrees, from the first chill day in September till warm weather was fairly established in June. Mrs. Bland never did anything but make a little tettering occasionally, when she felt particularly industrious. She left the house to Patty and Primus, and the outdoors and the stable to Simeon, while she sat and looked at the fire in winter, and the wall in summer; that is, at such times as she was awake, for she slept almost as much as a dormouse.

Her conversation, if such it could be called, was of the mildest quality, perfectly inoffensive but not enlivening. She would get hold of some small subject in the morning, and would keep it up at intervals all day long, coming out with

it from time to time hours after her listener thought it finally dismissed. On Monday morning she fell to thinking, whether the lace on Anne's cap, which she had worn when a baby, was Brussels or English thread. Anne not being able to settle the point to her satisfaction, she talked about it at intervals until Tuesday night. There is no telling how much longer she might have discussed the maker, if Diana had not rummaged among her sister's laces and produced a baby's cap, which she confidently affirmed must have been Anne's, and which was trimmed with Valenciennes.

Now and then when the weather was fine, Mrs. Bland would drive for a mile or two, always at the same jog rate, and always by the same road. The carriage, however, was at Anne's service whenever she chose to use it, and when the weather

grew finer she used to take many long rides with the children, Simeon or Primus being always ready for such an excursion. These expeditions were Anne's only amusement.

Mrs. Bland seldom received visits, and still more seldom made them. Once in a while she went out to tea, and occasionally had a tea party herself. Anne missed her old friends sadly. She could not sew always. She had fewer books to read than ever before, though she found herself caring less for her books, as there was no one who shared her own tastes with whom she could exchange a word.

She went to church, and the clergyman and his wife called upon her, and she returned the call. Mr. and Mrs. Leslie were pleasant people, and at the parsonage Anne felt more at home than any where else in Menango. Her unhappy reputation

as "a learned lady" had followed her, and though she never made the least display of her acquirements, the ladies of her aunt's circle rather looked down upon her, and firmly believed her incapable of making a pudding. Dick and Diana were never dull. They had the river to sail in; the wood lot on the hill to play in; a big garret full of old trunks and boxes for rainy days; a dog to run races with, and Simeon to tell them stories when their lessons were done.

They had a playmate, too, in John Graham, who was boarding at the parsonage, and going to school. John's full name was Washington, but he was never called by it. He was a bright, good natured, curly headed Western boy, of Dick's own age, and he and Diana were very good friends. Mrs. Bland never cared what the children did, or how much

noise they made. She told Patty always to keep cake on the pantry where the children could help themselves, and having given this order she troubled herself no more about them, except that she now and then sent to town for great parcels of candy, and gave them each a handsome present on their birthdays. As might be expected Aunt Sophy was approved of by Dick and Diana.

For the first three months matters went on with the children's lessons much as they had at home in Darton. Diana was sometimes lazy, and Dick sometimes inattentive and careless, but on the whole they had taken pains and made progress. After a time, however, matters began to go badly with Dick. He entertained enlarged ideas of his own consequence, and began to think that he was not appreciated as he should be by Anne and

Diana. He took less pains with his work; made a show of caring nothing for what he was doing; talked much about "hum-bugs," without suspecting he was in a fair way to become one himself, and took more pains not to understand his lessons than would have sufficed to learn them twice over. He treated Anne with disrespect; he affected to despise Diana's companionship, and made himself disagreeable as only a perverse boy can do. He put on airs of superiority towards John, at which that young gentleman only laughed, and he made friends with Osborne Briggs whom Diana detested.

Mr. Briggs lived at a farm house about a quarter of a mile from Mrs. Bland. He was an Englishman, who having been in the country only two years, had not recovered from his surprise at owning his own land. The Briggs' family

believed themselves to be people of great consequence; but were always in an agony for fear some one would look down upon them.

Mr. Briggs was very angry because Mrs. Bland had never called upon his wife. The old carriage and the two white horses never passed him that he did not regard them with a scornful and defiant air, and make some indignant remarks about "aristocrats," "stuck up gentility," and the like, which were all thrown away upon innocent Aunt Sophy. Osborne was a tall, awkward, white-faced boy of sixteen.

He did not go to school, for his parents thought the district school beneath him, and he himself said he had tried the academy, but it was not quite up to his mark. He managed to acquire a great influence over Dick, and the two boys

did each other no good. Osborne told Dick wonderful stories about his school in England, and the way in which big boys were allowed to abuse little ones. Dick supposing himself to be a big boy, thought all this very fine, and cared less for his old pursuits and his books, and his little sister. Osborne told him he would never be a man if he was always around with a little girl like Diana, and a "milk sop" like John; out of whose way he himself was very careful to keep, for private reasons of his own. He sneered at Dick's love and respect for his brother, and Dick began to be rather ashamed of his old devotion to Will. He spoke scornfully of Anne's teaching, and declared it impossible that a woman could know Latin, and said he should like to see himself learning anything from an old maid.

Dick, at first, was provoked at this talk, but he was ashamed of his better feelings; and, at length, came to believe it, and to look down upon his sister, and to wrong her in every way his perversity could suggest.

He left off saying his prayers at night, for he wasn't going to be like a good little boy in a Sunday-school book. He ran away from and avoided the pleasant Sunday afternoon talk and reading with his sisters, in which he had formerly taken pleasure; and, what was perhaps worst of all, he read, on the sly, what were really bad books, books in which the heroes were all highwaymen and pirates, and worse, where things degrading, wicked and shameless were made to appear manly and fine. Some of these works came from Osborne, some were bought secretly with Dick's own

money. He revolted from them at first, but gradually, as he persisted, he came to feel the fascination which such books sometimes seem to possess. After Jack Shepherd, Miss Edgeworth and Sir Walter Scott seemed very tame and commonplace, and Osborne said that Robinson Crusoe and fairy stories were only fit for girls. Osborne could not spell, but Dick was persuaded that his judgment was correct, and, if he ever read his old favorites, he took care that his new friend should not know. All this time Dick was by no means happy or comfortable. He knew he was doing wrong; his conscience reproved him. Anne's influence was still over him, though he did his best to shake it off. He was disgusted and angry with himself very often, but then he was persuaded that this state of mind was the fault of some

one else. He was provoked at Diana because she was fast going before him in their lessons; he was vexed at Anne because his own perversity troubled her; he was angry at John for liking to read and play with Diana, and he was annoyed with his aunt's ways, and learned to despise her in spite of her unceasing good nature. In short, he was out of patience with everything and everybody, except the one to blame, and that was himself.

Such was the state of affairs at the time when we first saw Dick fretting over his book in the large front room up-stairs, which was used as a school-room.

The next morning brought a letter from the Major, and Anne had scarcely glanced at it when her eye brightened, and she cried out, joyfully,

“O, Diana! Will is coming. He has leave of absence for six months. He’ll be here next week.”

Diana jumped up from the breakfast-table, where she had been seated, and executed a kind of fancy dance about the room, crying, “good! goody! O, how delightful!”

Dick’s first impulse had been to hurrah, but he had risen that morning in an uncommonly bad humor. He knew that it would vex his sisters if he pretended not to care, so he put on a show of perfect indifference, and went on with his breakfast.

“My dear child!” said Mrs. Bland, sweetly, to Diana, “how can you take such violent exercise? I’m afraid you might some time injure your spine, or break a blood vessel or something.”

“O, no I sha’n’t, Aunt Sophy!” said

Diana, reseating herself; "but Will don't come home every day."

"My love," said Mrs. Bland, "that would be impossible, because he has been so long in New Mexico, and it is too far away."

Diana laughed a little, but Dick sneered.

"But what does he say? Read it, Anne."

"It's very short. He only says he has not been as well as usual, and he has asked for leave and it has been granted. I am so glad. He has never been at home so long."

"Dick, don't you understand?" cried Diana, astonished at his coldness. "Will is coming home!"

"Yes, I hear," said Dick ungraciously. "What's the use of making such a fuss?"

"Why Dick Monroe!" said Diana, opening her grey eyes very wide.

Anne sighed. The pleasure was dashed, as Dick intended it should be.

"What day will he be here, Anne, love?" asked Mrs. Bland.

"Thursday—day after to-morrow. He stopped over a day in St. Louis to rest and see some friends."

"Now," said Mrs. Bland, falling into meditation, "I wonder what he would like for dinner."

"O, Will is not at all particular."

"But there must be something he likes."

"You are very kind, aunt. I think he likes roast lamb as well as anything."

"And peas—does he like peas?"

"I think so."

"Tell Patty to be sure and have some then. Anne what was it your father was so fond of?"

"I don't remember, aunt. Father was rather indifferent about what he ate."



"No, but there were some vegetables he liked so much, some sort of roots."

"Some sort of roots?" said Anne, puzzled.

"Yes, dear. Really I wonder you should not know, but I suppose you never had much to do with housekeeping, you were so fond of your book."

Anne blushed painfully, and Diana exclaimed, "O, Aunt Sophy, Anne always kept house beautifully."

But Mrs. Bland did not heed. She had gone back to her first subject.

"I am sure it was some kind of roots."

"Rutabaga?" suggested Diana.

"No, dear, not that; but I know he thought a great deal of them, for when husband and I were there, when you and Will were babies, dear, your father was so quiet and silent at dinner, and didn't seem to mind what was said, and husband said

it must be because he hadn't been able to find some Greek roots."

Diana choked herself with her coffee, and rushed out of the room. Dick looked very contemptuous and disagreeable. Anne checked her own amusement and attempted to explain the mistake; but it was sometime before Mrs. Bland could be made to understand that the roots in question were not vegetables.

The Major came home on Thursday in time for dinner, and assured his aunt, greatly to her satisfaction, that he liked lamb and green peas above all things. When he had time to observe Anne, he could not but think she looked tired and worn; and, seeing very clearly that Dick was not altered for the better, he put the two things together, and quietly resolved to find out for himself how matters stood. Anne made no com-

plaint of him; nor, when asked how the children learned their lessons, did she say anything more than that Dick did not seem to be as much interested as usual, but that Diana was doing well, both with her books and her music.

The day of Will's return was a holiday, but on Friday morning Anne called the children to the schoolroom, as usual. Dick was more than commonly perverse that day. He felt ashamed to look his brother in the face, and, instead of wishing to be with him from morning till night, as had always been his custom during Will's visits, he shrunk out of his sight, and had nothing to say but "yes" and "no" when the Major spoke to him. The first thing that he had done, after hearing that Will was coming home, was to hide away, more se-

curely than before, the books which he had read of late, and which he knew very well Will would never allow him to keep. Will was "so strict and puritanical," thought the silly boy; and Osborne said he presumed the Major did things on the sly himself, and was a very different man in garrison from what he wished to make Dick believe him to be at home. Osborne knew what officers were; he had "seen the world," and, of all things, he hated a humbug, who pretended to be better than other men, and so did his father. Mr. Briggs made no pretensions to be better than his neighbors, and could not have done so with the least success.

Dick chose his arithmetic this morning to fight over. If he had only fought his own wrong desires, ill-temper, and Osborne's bad influence as obstinately

as he fought against understanding decimal fractions what a fine fellow he would have been. It was the more disgraceful as he had been over the arithmetic once, and the lesson was a review.

“Dear Dick,” said Anne, at last, after she had gone over the explanation three times, “I am sure you must understand this if you will only think.”

“I don’t understand one word of it,” replied Dick, who had resolutely closed his ears to her. “Not a word. If I was to work at that sum till I was grey I couldn’t do it.”

“But you have been over this once.”

“I don’t care! I’ve forgotten all about it; I never do remember what you tell me.”

“I am sure I don’t see how I can make it any plainer,” said Anne, “but I will try if you will listen.” She began once

more, but stopped as she saw Dick's look of inattention.

"You do not mind what I say," she said.

"Well, I can't help it."

"Surely you can attend five minutes. How are you ever to learn anything if you go on in this way?" asked poor Anne.

"I don't care if I ever learn it or not. It's a humbug, and I don't see any use in arithmetic."

"O, Dick! for shame," cried Diana. "No use in arithmetic. What nonsense."

"You hold your tongue, Miss," retorted Dick. "I'm not going to be talked to by a chit of girl like you, if I *do* have to be lectured by an old maid like Anne from morning till night."

Dick would have given much to recall his words, as he looked up and saw the Major standing in the doorway. Will

made but one step, as it seemed, and took him by the shoulder with a hand that was both firm and hard.

"Ask your sister's pardon directly," he said in such a voice as Dick had never heard him use before. He hesitated a moment, but the command was emphasized with a sudden shake, and Dick said, "I beg your pardon, Anne," very meekly.

"Now, take your book and slate and do that sum in ten minutes, or you and I will have an account to settle." Dick obeyed without a word. The sum was done before the ten minutes had expired.

"So, you knew how to do it all the while?" said Major Monroe.

Dick was silent. He was ashamed to say "yes," and he dared not say "no."

Diana sat meanwhile and looked on with a scared face. Anne was crying silently.

“How many lies have you told during the past half-hour?” questioned the Major sternly.

“I don’t know what you mean,” said Dick in a low voice, for now that he had waked up the commanding officer in his good-natured brother, he was startled at the change.

“I was sitting in my room opposite, and I could not help hearing you; I did not speak at first, for I thought you were honestly dull and stupid.” Dick winced. “But when I heard your insolence to Anne, I knew it was perversity. You said over and over again, that you could not do your sum when you could, I call that lying—very mean lying. In the army we deal with that thing very shortly, and I don’t feel disposed to take any longer method at home. Go to my room, and stay there till I come to you.”

Dick obeyed without a word.

“Anne, my darling, don’t cry!” said the Major, kissing her. “No wonder you look tired and worn, if this is the sort of thing you have been going through lately. It sha’n’t happen again, if I can help it.”

“He never was so naughty before,” said Anne. “I am afraid I must be a very bad manager, or have failed in my duty some way of late, for he has changed so in the last few months. I am so sorry, and yet I have tried, Will.”

“Nonsense! I don’t believe in the theory that the scholar has nothing to do with his own condition, and that all a boy’s part is to sit still and be influenced and interested. You are too good to him, and he wants a sound thrashing.”

“O, Will!”

“You leave him to me, my love; I won’t hurt him. Diana, dear, run down to your music. Anne is going to ride with me, and wants to put on her habit, so never mind the rest of the lessons.”

Diana went down, but she sat at the piano and cried; and it was with a sorrowful heart that Anne dressed for her ride.

The Major wasted no words on Dick. He carried the school books into his own room, and put them down before his brother.

“You will have your lessons done, and ready to recite to me when I come back,” he said. “Do you understand?”

“Yes, sir,” said Dick.

The lessons were done in time, and were recited without any difficulty, but Dick did not come down-stairs till tea-



time, and, during the evening, he was much more respectful and pleasant in his manners than he had been for some weeks.





CHAPTER IV.

THE TURNING POINT REACHED.

WHEN Dick had time to think over that morning's work he felt very much ashamed of himself, and the sensation was very wholesome. The Major's sudden sharpness and decision had startled him out of the ill-humor and laziness into which he had fallen; and, when he looked back over his life for the past few months, he could not but suspect that, instead of being the fine, manly, independent fellow he had supposed, he had, in reality, been behaving much like a cross baby. For

the rest of that week he recited his lessons to his brother, and very excellent recitations he made. The Major was ready to help him as far as possible, as long as he saw that Dick really tried; but he would not tolerate laziness or inattention for a moment. Under this drill, Dick did himself credit; and, as he took more pains with his lessons, he became more interested in his books. But he could not make up all at once the time he had worse than than wasted. He was mortified to find that Diana was the better scholar. Her translations were undeniably the best. Her knowledge of the grammar was more thorough than his own, and she could answer any question that came up in their reading much more readily than himself.

“How did you know all that, Di?”

asked Dick one morning when their lessons were over. Some questions had come up about Charlemagne, and to Dick's surprise, Diana had a long story to tell, to which Will had listened with much interest, frankly owning that his little sister was better posted than himself.

"Why don't you remember?" said Diana. "Anne told us ever so much about him, and then she said there was a paper about in one of the old reviews, and I found it and read it. Wasn't it odd about his learning to read after he was almost an old man? I should think you'd remember how he talked about it."

Dick did remember, but he had resolutely refused his attention, and made a show of despising "Charlemagne and all his peerage," as quite beneath his consideration.

"John Graham's got a book that's all

full of translations from the Italian poets about him—Charlemagne I mean, not John. They are as good as the Arabian Nights; all about how Astolfo went to the moon on a flying dragon.”

“My dear child,” said Mrs. Bland, waking up from her semi-nap in which she had been in the beginning of the talk, “My dear child! that sounds very improbable.”

“Of course they are only stories, aunt; but I like to read them. Don’t you?”

“But, my love, if things are not true, then they must be false, and I am sure it is wicked to tell lies.”

“O, Aunt Sophy! they are not lies, they are only make believe. It is just as when Dick and John and I go up in the woods and play Robinson Crusoe, and pretend that we are Crusoe, and Man-Friday, and savages, and parrots and cats.

We know we are not, but we just make believe for fun."

"You had better ask Major Monroe about it, my love," said Mrs. Bland.

"O, Will makes the best Robinson of any of us, aunt; and he makes a splendid parrot. He can say 'poor Robinson Crusoe!' just like a parrot exactly, and if you heard him mew, you'd think he was a real cat."

"I hardly think I should, my dear," said Mrs. Bland, mildly, "because you know a cat is so much smaller, and all furry."

Fortunately for the children Patty came in here to ask her mistress what she wished for dinner. Diana went to her practice, and Dick going up stairs made a secret resolution that if ever Anne was his teacher again, he would listen to what he had scornfully called her "lectures."

“Dick,” called the Major from the opposite side of the room, “please run down and ask Aunt Sophy if she would mind my giving you a few lessons in firing at a mark. Tell her we will go up on the hill, almost out of hearing, and quite out of danger.”

Highly delighted, Dick ran down stairs and into his aunt’s room where Patty was endeavoring to make up her mistress’s mind about dinner. “Really, Patty, I’m sure I don’t know,” said Mrs. Bland at last. “You had better ask Major Monroe.”

Will had been in the house only a week, and his aunt was fast growing into a habit of referring to him every question that came up for decision. She had the utmost confidence in him, and she was saved the very little trouble which she had hitherto taken in thinking for herself.

“Dear me, Missis,” said Patty, “the Major won’t want to say. Suppose we have veal.”

“Very well,” said Mrs. Bland, “but you had better ask the Major.”

“And the dressmaker’s sent her little girl up to ask whether you want the skirt of your black silk dress plaited or gathered,” continued Patty.

“Really I don’t know,” said Mrs. Bland in her mildest, sleepest tone. “You had better ask Major Monroe.”

Dick, waiting on tip-toe for a chance to speak to his aunt, could not help laughing.

“Laws, Missis!” said Patty almost out of patience, “what does the Major know about ladies’ dresses? Why don’t you ask Miss Anne?”

“Very well, ask Miss Anne,” murmured Mrs. Bland.

“I saw that lady from New York had her’s plaited,” persisted Patty. “It looked elegant. She’s visiting at Mr. Leslie’s.”

“Then, ask Mr. Leslie,” murmured Mrs. Bland, more than half asleep.

Patty gave up her attempts in despair, and decided for plaits on her own responsibility.

“Aunt Sophy,” said Dick, eagerly, stopping her on the very edge of a sound nap, “Will wants to know if he may teach me to fire at a mark. He says we’ll go up on the hill most out of hearing, and quite out of danger.”

“Surely, my dear, whatever he likes; only, Dick, please ask him to be very careful not to shoot himself.”

Dick darted away with this message, which amused the Major not a little, and they went down stairs, Dick carrying the pistol case.



"Where are you going?" asked Diana, running out into the hall.

"Will's going to teach me to shoot," said Dick, proudly.

"O, Will! Let me go too," besought Diana. "I want to know how as well as Dick."

"*You* learn to shoot," said Dick, scornfully. "As if girls wanted to know such things, or could learn if they did want to."

"You are not very civil, Dick," said his brother. "Let me tell you, you are mistaken. When we were expecting every day that little Fort Elvers would be besieged by the Indians, we taught all the ladies in the garrison to shoot as a matter of necessity, and some of them were very good shots too. Come, if you want to, Diana, only you must stand where I tell you and not frisk about."

Diana promised, flew up stairs for her

bonnet, and presently rejoined her brothers.

"You'll scream when the shots go off," said Dick. "Girls always do."

"I don't," said Diana. "You know I never do, Dick, unless at something really awful—like spiders."

Will could not help joining in Dick's laugh.

"To do you justice, Diana," he said, "I do not think you are given to screaming. I remember when we were run away with, in Darton, you sat as still as a mouse, and never said a word."

"Because I knew if I screamed I should frighten the horses more; but I *am* afraid of spiders. Will, I mean I'm not afraid, you know, for I'm sure they can't hurt me, but I just can't bear the sight of them. I know it's silly, and I tried to get over it, and

stood and looked at one spinning its web ever so long once, till I really felt faint. I did, indeed, Will."

"I dare say, Di. Those nervous fears are very curious sometimes. If it will be any comfort to you, I know an officer in our regiment who was all through the Mexican war, and has distinguished himself more than once by his courage, and yet he confessed to me that he was afraid of a spider, and I have seen him turn very pale when he found one crawling over him."

"A cavalry officer, and afraid of a spider!" laughed Dick. "I remember Professor Martin couldn't sit in the room with a cat—or he thought so."

"Afraid of a cat!" said Diana. "How silly!"

"Why more silly than to be afraid of a spider?" asked Will.

“O, because a cat is nice, and clean, and soft, and furry; and a spider is all squirmy and soft, and kicks his legs about so horribly. See there, Dick,” added Diana, looking back as they went through the orchard; “isn’t that John coming in at the side gate?”

“Yes,” said Dick. “He said he was coming up when Will came, because he wanted to hear about his father.”

John’s father was in the army too, and was at the frontier post, where the Major had been stationed.

“I have a letter and a little parcel for him,” said the Major. “Diana, they are in the top of that little black trunk. Will you please run back and get them, as I dare say the boy will want to see them as soon as possible. You and he can come up to us afterwards.”



Diana turned back to meet John, who suspended his whistle as soon as he saw her.

“There’s a parcel and a letter for you in the house,” said Diana. “I am to get them for you, and then Will wants us to come up on the hill. He’s going to teach Dick to shoot.”

John was delighted with the invitation, and with his father’s letter, which he read as he walked along. Diana noticed, with secret satisfaction, that he read the letter before he opened the little parcel. John read bits of it to Diana as they walked along.

“O, Diana!” he cried out, “only think I’ve got a little sister. Look at the dear, little curl of black hair from her little head. O dear, don’t I want to see her! I feel as if I could fly.”

“What do they call her?” said Diana.

“Nothing yet, only ‘baby;’ father says I may have the naming of her. I tell you what, Diana, I’ll call her after you, Diana Monroe Graham. It sounds real pretty.”

“O, John!” said Diana, blushing with delight. “Will you really?”

“Indeed I will. You’re the nicest girl I ever knew; you aint a bit silly, and I know father and mother will be pleased because they think so much of your brother.”

Diana was greatly affected by the compliment, and she determined that she would immediately consult Anne, and set about making something pretty for her namesake.

“And father’s shot a grizzly, and he’s sent me the claws; they’re in the parcel I suppose. My! Don’t I wish I could.”

“Maybe you will sometime. You know how to shoot; don’t you, John?”

“A little,” said John, modestly. “I shot a bear once; but it was by accident, and he was only a brown bear.”

“Shot a bear!” said Diana, breathlessly.

“Yes, it was two years ago, when I was in Northern California with father. We were in camp, and nobody thought there were any such creatures near, and I had father’s revolver, and I went into the bushes, and first I knew, I found myself right face to face with this fellow; I tell you I was scared some if not more. He came right up to me, and I fired almost without knowing what I did, and happened to hit just the right place and killed him.”

“What did your father say?” asked Diana, admiringly.

“He didn’t say very much; only he took uncommon good care not to let me run about by myself too far from the camp after that, but that’s nothing to a grizzly.

Let me show you his claws," and John opened the parcel and displayed the terrible talons which Captain Graham had caused to be strung Indian fashion into a necklace.

"Think of having those things catch hold of you," said Diana, with a shudder.

"You must manage to catch hold first," said John. "See! here's your brother and Dick, and some one else. If it isn't Osborne Briggs! What does make Dick like that fellow?"

"I don't know, I don't like him. Do you?"

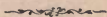
"No, not much."

"He always teases me and says I'm a girl," said Diana, injured.

"Well, who wants you to be anything else, I should like to know?"

"But he says it in such a hateful way."

"You just let me catch him teasing



you," said John, chivalrously; "I'll give him what he can't buy at the store. I'd like to see any boy teasing *my* little sister," said the boy, ready to defy the world in the cause of the two months' old baby in New Mexico.

"I wish Dick felt that way," thought Diana to herself, as she remembered how Dick had let Osborne torment her, and laughed at her annoyance and vexation. She dismissed the thought from her mind as soon as she could, but ever since that day there had been a little sore place in Diana's heart, and she could not imagine why John's speech made her feel like crying. She did not speak again till they joined the Major, who had heard much about the boy from his fond father, and was glad to meet him.

"So you have got the claws," said the Major.

“Yes, sir. Were you with father when he shot the bear?”

“Yes, didn’t he tell you? We came on the creature unexpectedly when we were out together, and had separated from our party. She came directly after us. I had emptied one barrel, fired the other, and only wounded the bear a little, and made her rush forward faster than ever. Under the circumstances I thought it no disgrace to run away; but she had fairly touched me when your father came close up to us, fired and killed her.”

“O, Will! you never told us that,” and Diana clung to her brother and began to cry.

“Hush! you silly girl,” said Will. “The bear is dead and I am here.”

Dick drew a long breath.

“I wish I could go somewhere and shoot bears,” he said wistfully.

“John killed a bear once,” said Diana, eagerly.

“Why, John! did you really,” cried Dick, while Osborne looked incredulous and sneered.

“It was only a brown one, and it was more by accident than anything else,” said John, coloring. “Never mind it now.”

“Then you know how to shoot?”

“A little. Father taught me.”

Dick’s respect for John went up several degrees.

“A likely story he ever shot a bear,” whispered Osborne. “Are you fool enough to believe it?”

“Hush!” said Dick, shortly, turning away from Osborne rather rudely, and going to his brother.

“Now, Diana, stand still where you are,” said Will. “Now, Dick, hold your hand steady, and fire when I give the word.”



But Dick's hand trembled a little from excitement, or his aim was false. The ball went wide of the mark, and off to parts unknown. Diana knew that Osborne expected her to scream at the explosion, so she held her lips tight together, and did not even say "oh!"

"Now, Diana, will you try?" said the Major, smiling; "or does it make too much noise?"

Had Diana been alone with her brothers, she might very likely have said, "No, thank you;" for, truth to tell, she felt very nervous. But she was resolved that Osborne should have no reason to laugh at her for a coward. She managed to keep her eyes from shutting, and, to her own great delight, hit the extreme verge of the target, which was a very large and conspicuous one.

“Will your friend like to try, Dick?” asked the Major, politely, turning to Osborne. But Osborne declined gruffly. He felt himself very much out of his element in the Major’s company. Dick, for the first time, wished that Osborne were anywhere else, and could not help feeling rather ashamed of his friend, though he hardly knew why. In the first place he was perfectly certain that Will was not favorably impressed, and he was quite right. Will would not have cared at all that Osborne’s clothes were not fine or fashionable, but they looked as if they had not been brushed for weeks, and Will noticed that he wore a large gilt chain over soiled linen, and an imitation gold ring on a hand which looked as if it would have been much better for soap and water. Then Osborne’s manner

toward himself had been such a compound of awkwardness and boldness that the Major was anything but attracted. John followed Diana, and hit the target twice, almost in the very middle, and once exactly. Diana was overcoming her first nervousness, and was listening eagerly to her brother's instructions, when the Major noticed that Osborne had taken up one of the pistols, and was playing with it.

"Please not to meddle with that," said the Major, politely. "It is loaded, and loaded firearms are never safe play-things."

"O! I aint afraid," said Osborne, confidently.

"That is not the question," said the Major, with some decision. "Be so good as to put that down."

Osborne obeyed with a sullen face,

but the moment the Major's back was turned, as he showed Dick how to take aim, Osborne picked up the other pistol, and began to handle it. Dick fired, but a second shot followed in quick succession, and then, indeed, Diana screamed wildly.

"O, Anne! Anne!" she shrieked. "She's killed!" and she darted down the hill to where, a few feet below them, Anne was lying motionless.

"Are you hurt, Anne? Where?" said the Major, trembling with anxiety, as he knelt by her side.

"I don't think I'm hurt at all, dear," said Anne, recovering her consciousness, which she had partly lost. "I stumbled and fell, and something whistled over my head with such a strange noise." Anne wore a broad Canadian hat. Will took it off to give her air and put it into Dick's

hand; Dick looked at it and turned very white.

“O, Will!” he said in an awe struck whisper. “Just see, the ball went through the brim here at the back. If she had not stumbled then she would have been killed. O, Will! Did I do it?”

Will drew a long breath, and it was a moment before he could speak, his hand trembled a little as he took the hat and saw where the ball had cut its way.

“Thank God you are safe, sister,” he said. “No, Dick, it could not have been your ball of course, for you fired the other way. Who touched the other pistol?”

No one answered, but Diana and John both looked round for Osborne. The moment Osborne saw what he had done he had turned to run away, but seeing that Anne was alive he had hidden for a moment behind a tree, and looked down

upon the group below. Observing that she was not hurt, he came forward with an awkward laugh.

"Well, there's no harm done after all," he said, attempting to assume an air of confidence, and failing signally under the Major's eye.

"It was you then," said that gentlemen, very coldly.

"Well, I didn't mean any harm, I did not see Anne was coming up the hill."

"Do you mean Miss Monroe?" said Will, sharply.

"Yes, sir," said Osborne, in spite of himself.

"Be so good as to say so then. Did I not desire you to leave the pistol alone?"

"I just took it up for a minute," began Osborne.

"You have no excuse for taking it up at all. It was only because she happened

to slip at that instant that she was not killed."

"I am sure Osborne meant no harm," said Anne, gently. "It was only an accident."

"It was no accident, he meddled with what did not belong to him. Excuse me if I say I prefer you should not join us again. I cannot have a boy who cannot do as he is told in the neighborhood of firearms. Good morning," and the Major bowed and turned away.

"I ain't going to be insulted by no stuck up officer," began Osborne, but the officer taking no sort of notice of him, a farther evidence of his "stuck up" qualities, Osborne felt that his fine speeches would be wasted, and walked away in great indignation. He left no one in the company who was more disgusted with him than his former admirer Dick.

“I was coming to tell you that it was almost dinner-time,” said Anne to her brother, as she sat to rest for a few minutes, while John went back to the place where they had been shooting and put up the pistols. “Don’t look so startled, Dick.”

To her surprise Dick burst into a violent fit of crying, and ran away toward the house.

“Poor boy!” said his brother, looking after him, with rather a tremble in his own voice. “He thought it was his fault at first. I hope this Master Osborne is not a very intimate friend of his.”

“I don’t think he is,” said Anne, who had no idea how much Dick and Osborne had been together. “I have only seen the boy once or twice before, and was not much pleased with him.”

Diana knew very well how much Dick

and Osborne had been together, but she did not care to speak about it.

“Don’t say anything about this to Aunt Sophy,” said Anne; “she would be so frightened.”

“Perhaps it is best not. I want Dick to learn to shoot, and there is no sort of danger with the other children who mind what they are told.”

In the meantime Dick had reached his own room, and shut himself in. He could not help thinking how, but for that sudden slip, they would now have been bringing home Anne’s dead body. As he looked back over the last few months he felt humiliated and ashamed. His feelings were bitter enough now, but what would they have been had Anne indeed been killed.

“What a fool I have been!” he said to himself impatiently, as he sprang up

from the chair into which he had thrown himself, and walked hastily up and down the room. "How Osborne did act this morning. I wonder if he's always been such a fellow and I've only just found it out? I wonder what made me read those nasty, hateful books? I wish I could forget them. I keep thinking about them just when I don't want to. I'll burn up mine, and give his back to him as soon as I can. I wouldn't have Will catch me with them for the world. What should I do if he should find them? I'm a great mind to tell him the whole story; but he'd be so angry if he knew how I laughed at Aunt Sophy, and mimicked her at Osborne's. O dear! whatever did possess me?"

Dick's sorrow was hardly that which worketh unto the best repentance. He was more vexed that he had made a fool



of himself, than sorry because he had grieved his sister. He was more afraid of being found out than he was ashamed of the sin. He could not see that "what possessed him" had been himself, and his own selfishness, and blamed Osborne for the whole. He had met Osborne after turning into the wrong path, and had chosen his company willingly.

"I'll never behave as I have done again," resolved Dick, and the resolution was good as far as it went. But Dick did not build on the one firm foundation. He did not ask God's help.

"May I come in, Dick," said the Major, knocking at the door, and Dick opened it rather reluctantly.

"I've been silly, I know," he said.

"What, for crying about this matter?" said Will, sitting down and drawing his brother toward himself. "I don't

think so. It was a terrible thing. I believe we were all more frightened than Anne herself. I don't know how to be thankful enough. But, Dick, is this Master Briggs a great friend of yours?"

"Not such a very great friend," said Dick, reluctantly. "I've played with him a good deal. He's the only boy around here."

"I wouldn't have much to do with him," said Will. "He seems anything but a desirable companion."

"I won't have any more to do with him, Will," said Dick, readily. "I knew you didn't like him, but he never seemed as he did this morning; but, Will, don't you never want me to play with poor boys?"

"Do you think I am such a snob as that? I don't care about a boy's being

poor, or not wearing fine clothes, but I don't like impudence and disobedience, and Osborne seems to me to possess both; and, perhaps, it is hard judgment on my part, but he doesn't look to me like a boy to be trusted."

Dick hung his head. He knew very well that Will had perfect confidence in him, and he felt that he did not deserve it. He thought, remorsefully, of the books hidden away, and of his mimicry of his aunt. The impulse was upon him to tell the whole story, and take the consequences whatever they were, but he resisted his own better nature.

"I'll never do anything I know he won't like again, if I know it," he thought.

"I don't want to lecture you, my man," said Will, kindly; "but do be

sure and keep out of low company. There is nothing that ruins a young man more effectually. You have others to think of beside yourself. If the news should come sometime that I had been shot, or died of a fever, you would be left to take care of the girls."

"O, brother! don't talk so!" said Dick, hiding his face on the Major's shoulder.

"You know the far West isn't always the safest place in the world, and I only want to make you see that you must make a man of yourself, not only for your own sake, but for others," said Will, kissing him. "You must do it yourself, Dick. Your sister and I can only show you the road; it is you who must walk in it—after the one Guide, dear."

"Yes, brother, I know. I'll try to

be a good boy—indeed I will!” said Dick, greatly affected; “and I’ll never be cross to Anne again.”

“That’s right; but I must not keep you any longer, for it is almost dinner-time, and John will wonder where you have gone. He is a fine little fellow.”

“Yes; he’s a real nice boy,” said Dick, heartily; for John had more than regained his place in Dick’s estimation.

“My dears,” said Mrs. Bland, when the desert was placed on the table, “I am going to have a pony to ride.”

“*You* ride a pony, Aunt Sophy!” said Diana, with wide open eyes.

“O, no, darling; I never rode on horseback—not when I was a young lady, and now it wouldn’t do at all. I mean it for you and Dick.”

Diana skipped up from her seat and kissed her aunt affectionately. “O! you

—*—*
darling Aunt Sophy!" she said. "How nice you are!" but Dick hung his head, and colored to his hair.

"I don't deserve it, Aunt Sophy," he said.

"My dear, I am sure you are a very good boy. There was a boy here once, when my husband was alive," pursued Mrs. Bland, "who whittled the stair-rail. Now I've never seen you whittle anything but a stick. I'm sure you are a good boy, and your brother is quite willing you should have the pony, and a side-saddle for Diana. Simeon will bring it this afternoon."

"You are so good, Aunt Sophy," said Anne, greatly pleased. "Did Will know about it?"

"It was only this morning that aunt told me," said the Major. "I am sure I am as much pleased as Diana, for

I should like to have Dick know how to ride."

The pony, a beautiful grey one, came that afternoon, and a fine time the children had with him; but in Dick's secret heart there was an uncomfortable sense of shame and annoyance with himself, when he remembered how he had ridiculed Aunt Sophy to Osborne Briggs.





CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN THE FAMILY.

THAT evening, when Anne was sitting with her aunt after tea, Diana confided to her the story of John's little sister—her own namesake—and asked advice about the intended present.

“I wish it could be something real pretty,” said Diana; “because she's named for me, and because her father kept the bear from killing Will.”

“From killing Will?” said Anne, startled. “What do you mean?”

The Major told her the story in as few words as possible.

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Bland. “Will, my dear, why do you do such very unsafe things as to go off after bears and Indians, and round in such wild places. I am sure you will be hurt some day. Does the War Department want the officers to kill grizzly bears, or why do they do such things?”

“There have been no orders in particular about it from the department,” said the Major smiling. “And we find time rather heavy on our hands now and then, and we go hunting for sport.”

“I never could imagine what pleasure there could be in going about with a gun,” pursued Mrs. Bland; “and then bears are such fierce, great creatures. I am sure, Will, if this one had not been killed, it might have bitten you very badly.”

“I dare say it might, Aunt Sophy.”

“Mr. Bland was bitten by a squirrel

once," continued Mrs. Bland, "it wasn't a wild squirrel, it was a tame one; but he had to wear a bit of linen round his finger for more than a week. So you see how dangerous it is to be bitten by any animal, and a bear would be worse than a squirrel, you know."

"O! Aunt Sophy," said Diana, "I should think it would. If you had seen the claws John had you'd think so."

"But they don't bite with their claws, my dear. Lobsters will, I believe, but I think not bears."

"No, but they claw hold of you. O! I can't bear to think about it. Do tell me Anne what I shall make for the baby."

"I am afraid Di that you are hardly needlewoman enough to make her a frock or any such thing. Baby clothes want the very nicest sewing."

"What baby?" said Mrs. Bland.

“The little New Mexican baby, aunt, John’s sister.”

“But John is not a Mexican,” said Mrs. Bland in a puzzle.

“No, but his father and mother, Will’s friends, Captain and Mrs. Graham you know, they are in New Mexico,” said Diana, a little put out.

“Are they,” said Mrs. Bland, completely bewildered. “How did they get there?”

“They went there at the same time I did,” said the Major.

“Because they liked their own country better than this? But if they are Mexicans how does it happen that John is not. I thought all Mexicans were dark and spoke Spanish; but perhaps New Mexicans are different from old Mexicans; or perhaps they grow darker after they get old,” went on Mrs. Bland, mystifying herself more and more.



The Major with great seriousness went to work to explain the case as far as he could, and meantime Anne and Diana considered the subject of the present.

“You can crochet very neatly,” said Anne, “you might begin a baby’s blanket in shell stitch, and that could go by mail in an envelope.”

“So it could,” said Diana, “and it would be pretty, too. I wish I could buy her something pretty that she could always keep to remember me by, because of the bear.”

“But Diana, it was not the baby who killed the bear?” said Mrs. Bland.

“It was her father, Aunt Sophy.”

“Why don’t you send her a coral necklace, love? I had one when I was a baby and got some of the beads into my mouth and swallowed them, but they did not hurt me.”

"I haven't any money, Aunt Sophy."

"I can give you some, dear."

"O, thank you, aunty," said Diana; "but I want this to be my very own present, and if you gave me the money it wouldn't be, but I'm just as much obliged," and Diana went across the room to kiss her aunt.

"I think the blanket would be the prettiest," she said, coming back to Anne. "Let me run up and get your shawl, and look at it."

"Very well," said Anne, and Diana ran away and presently reappeared with a soft, large shawl of fleecy white zephyr, very pretty to look at, and very becoming to Anne's tall, slender figure, when thrown over her shoulders.

"My love," said Mrs. Bland. "That's a beautiful shawl. Where did you get it? I should like to have one like it."

“I made it, Aunt Sophy; I shall be very glad to make you one like it if you wish.”

Mrs. Bland stroked the shawl as it lay on her lap, with her soft, white hand.

“My dear,” she said, suddenly to Anne, “I think you must be very clever.”

“Have you only just found that out, Aunt Sophy?” said Will, smiling.

“O, but really now I do. It was only yesterday that you put my cap-drawer so nicely in order, and you made this all yourself. I dare say you *can* make a pudding after all.”

“Why,” cried Diana, “Anne always did all the nice cooking at home, and made preserves and cake herself. Didn’t you, Anne?”

“I think I did, Diana.”

“Dear me,” said Mrs. Bland, admiringly, “and yet you can read those big, old books in your room, and teach the children

and all. How very nice! Do you know," she went on, as though announcing a discovery, "I think it is a very good thing for people to know how to do everything, for then they can do anything."

"We are wandering a long way from Diana's matter," said Anne. "If you like that, Diana, I will get the worsted for you. It will not cost much. Will you have the border pink or blue?"

Diana decided for pink.

"I will get the material for you then to-morrow," said Anne, "and for aunt's shawl, if she would like to have one. I should like to do it very much."

"Thank you, Anne love, if it would not be too much trouble."

Here Dick, who had been down to the post-office with Simeon, came in with a letter for Anne.

It was an invitation from an old

friend of Annie's in Darton, asking her to keep an old promise, and come and be bridesmaid. The Major was asked to accompany his sister, as both bride and bridegroom were old friends and playmates.

Will decided at once that they must go.

"But what shall we do with Dick and Diana?" said Anne, who longed to go, and yet had doubts about the expense of the journey and of a new gown.

"Why need you do anything with them, Anne, love?" said Mrs. Bland. "They can stay here, can't they?"

"Dear Aunt Sophy," said Anne, smiling, "I am afraid they would half-tear the house down, if left to themselves."

"I don't think they could, because it is so well built, and then they

wouldn't want to tear it down. Would you, Dick?"

"Of course not, Aunt Sophy. I never tore a house down in my life."

"There! I told you so, Anne. I am sure Dick and Diana are uncommonly good children. When your uncle's niece was here with her two children—oh! a great many years ago—whenever they wanted cake they used to cry for it; and, really, it was very tiresome; but Dick and Diana just go to the pantry and get it for themselves."

"There, now, Anne!" said the Major, "since the children are such models of virtue as to help themselves to cake whenever they want it, I am sure you can trust them to aunt's care."

"And Patty says they *never* put their fingers into the preserves," said Mrs. Bland.

Dick and Diana looked at each other and laughed out.

“O, you must go, Anne!” said Diana. “You see now we’ll be as good as mice and as steady as old time.”

“Yes, and we’ll do some lessons every day,” said Dick, in a sudden gush of enthusiasm.

“Only won’t you begin the blanket first, please, Anne?” asked Diana.

“I don’t know——” said Anne, hesitatingly.

“But I do,” said the Major. “I should never forgive myself if I did not see Mary and John married.”

“And you know, dear, they never can be married again; and, if you don’t see them this time, you never will,” urged Mrs. Bland, with great truth.

“And I want to go, and I sha’n’t go

without you," said Will; "so if you stay at home you will be selfishly depriving me of a pleasure."

"Very well, then; I suppose I shall have to go," said Anne; "and we must be ready to start by the first of next week. Yes, Di, I will begin your work for you before I leave."

When Dick and Diana were left to themselves, for leaving them "in their aunt's care" was merely a polite fiction, they fully intended to be exceedingly steady and sober.

Dick had never returned those books to Osborne, and now learned that Osborne had gone away from home for a visit. He did not like to leave the parcel at his house, for he was not quite sure whether Mr. and Mrs. Briggs would approve of such books, and he did not wish to betray his former

friend. As to the project which he had formed, of burning his own share, it was not so easy to find a chance to destroy several numbers of a very low paper, and two or three bulky pamphlets, without attracting some one's notice. Confident that they were safe in their hiding place, therefore, he let them alone. He had adhered to his resolution of never reading them again, but he was vexed to find that he could not forget the thought and images with which he had filled his imagination, and that he had not touched pitch and come off undefiled.

For the first two days of their brother and sister's absence Dick and Diana conscientiously learned their usual lessons. Anne had given them no regular tasks; had advised them to do a little work every day, but had smilingly refused to accept

any promises as to the quantity or regularity of the work to be done. The next morning John Graham came up on a pony that he had borrowed, with the proposal that Dick and Diana should take their own pony, go off into the woods, and have a picnic. Aunt Sophy being consulted as a matter of form, said "yes" as a matter of course; only she told them not to go too far, and hoped that they would be careful to take enough to eat along with them, and come home before dark. Patty took care that they obeyed the first piece of advice, and they supposed themselves to have acted according to the second, when they made their appearance just as the last glow of sunset was fading out of the sky. Diana's frock was torn in five places, and she was burned as brown as a berry. Patty held up her hands, and scolded the boys for leading Missy into mischief; but

Mrs. Bland only remarked that there were plenty more gingham frocks to be bought, and that of course if Diana went with her brother, she wanted to go where he did, and bade Patty "get the dear children a nice supper."

The next day was rainy and dark, an excellent day to study; but the express man brought a parcel of story books which Mrs. Bland had ordered when she first heard the children were coming, and which had but just now made their appearance. Mrs. Bland had named no books in particular, only stated that there had better be plenty of fairy tales, as she believed all children liked them. The bookseller fortunately knew a good book from a bad or silly one, and had made a charming selection.

To settle down to arithmetic and history with "The Young Marooners," "Philip in

Palestine," and "Little Meg's Children" in the house, would have been too much to expect of any child, out of a book. At all events if any one had expected it of Dick and Diana they would have been disappointed. They read from morning till night, and only stopped when they went to bed. Nor would they have stopped then, only that Patty was inexorable and took away the candle.

The next morning they did three sums, and one chapter of Cæsar, actually, before they touched a story book. Then Dick remembered that they must write to Will and Anne, and in the midst of the letter they heard that three little kittens had been found in the barn. Of course they went to see the kittens which, as Dick said, was a mere necessary civility to their friend, the old cat. Equally, as a matter of course, they stayed with them



Finding the kittens. Page 108.



an hour, so that there was barely time to finish the letter for Simeon to take to the office. Then came dinner, and in the afternoon Diana wanted to work at the baby's blanket, and Dick read "It Isn't Right" aloud to her. To read anything whatever was, in Aunt Sophy's eye, a meritorious action, and when she found them thus employed, she remarked that she thought Anne had brought them up uncommonly well, they were both so fond of their books.

The next day they were asked to spend the day at Mr. Leslie's, and the next day was Sunday. They did manage to learn their Sunday-school lessons before church, and Monday was the Sunday-school picnic, so that Diana said it really seemed as if "the fates were against their ever studying."

When at the end of ten days their

brother and sister came home, and Anne inquired after their lessons, they reported three chapters of Cæsar, four pages of English History, five sums for the two, a pile of story-books read through, and Diana's work three-quarters done, neat as possible and without a missed stitch, "and that at least was something," said Dick with satisfaction, and then hung down his head as Will smiled. "To be sure it's nothing for me," he said.

"O, but it is!" said Diana. "For he read aloud to me a good deal when I was working, or I should have been reading myself. O, Will, you must read 'Dick and his Friend Fidus,' it's splendid."

"But really I meant to do more," said Dick. "I don't see why we didn't, but something was always coming to pass."

"Yes, it really seemed as if it was the fates," said Diana, earnestly.

“The kittens and the pony you mean, don’t you?” said the Major laughing. “You have done quite as much as I expected.”

“Have we really?” said Diana, in great surprise. “Why, Anne, was that why you wouldn’t let us promise?”

“Perhaps so,” said Anne, smiling.

“Dear me, I didn’t think we were such a pair of geese, did you, Dick?”

“Nay, you are nothing but goslings,” said Will.

“Then I’ve a right to *peep*,” said Diana, pulling a concealed parcel out of her brother’s pocket. “I knew you’d bring us some sugar plums out of dear, old Auntie Smith’s shop in Darton. O, dear! They taste just as they used to, Will! I wish everybody in the world had all the candy they wanted.”

“What a lot that would be for some

folks," said Dick, who for some time past had not been quite sure whether burnt almonds were not beneath his dignity. "Did you use to like candy, Will?"

"I like it now," said the Major, helping himself. "Don't you?"

"Dick said once he thought sugar plums were only fit for little children," said Diana, "but I guess he wants some now."

"Dear me," said Will, "I hope I sha'n't lose your respect, Dick, but the fact is I like them myself."

"Never mind, Dick," said Anne, "every one has an *old* fit when about your age; I was a great deal older myself at fifteen than I am now."

"Burnt almonds always make me think of Cousin Hamilton," said Dick.

"Why?" asked the Major.

"O, because she was so disagreeable."

"I don't see it yet, for you seem to

think the almonds rather nice than otherwise."

"Because," said Diana, "we never could have anything nice or pretty that she didn't say something to spoil it. If we had cake or candy, or anything like that, she'd always remind us that there were a great many little boys and girls who could not get bread, and I'm sure I would have given them all some if I could. She'd always act and make me feel just as if I'd taken the things all away from some one else, and once when Dr. Mills took Flora and me to Aunty Smith's and bought ice cream and cake for us, she happened to be there, and she told us about 'the starving millions in Europe,' till we couldn't enjoy it a bit. Just as if I could have sent a saucer of ice cream to Europe."

"And when Diana gave her half-dollar

to Mrs. Mills for her missionary box," said Dick, "Cousin Hamilton said it was not good in her because she gave it for the sake of being praised, and Di never thought of such a thing."

"And after all, when Anne wanted her to help in buying a pair of blankets for poor old Mrs. McFarlane, she would not give anything, because she said she didn't approve of indiscriminate charity, only of systematic benevolence." "Anne said she felt as if she had a thousand pounds weight lifted off her when she was gone," said Dick.

"I never said so to you," said Anne, smiling.

"No, but you did to yourself; besides we knew you couldn't bear her."

"She certainly was rather trying," said Anne. "Diana, if you eat any more candy you will be sick."



"I've done now till next time," said Diana, jumping off her brother's knee.

"Dick, we haven't seen the little cats to-day. Come out to the barn."

"Look here, Di," said Dick, while they were playing with the kittens, "what do you suppose is the reason we did not do any better with our lessons? It's all nonsense to say we couldn't, you know, and I really meant to."

"Well, I suppose we were careless. O, you itty pecious kitty cat! Did it det its little eyes open?"

"But we should have done them if Anne had been here," persisted Dick.

"Yes, because then we should *have* to do them."

"But we might have made ourselves
——"

"O, dear! I suppose we might. I wonder what is the reason we've always

got to have to," said Diana, in questionable English. "But I tell you what, Dick, if Will and Anne had said when they went away, that they knew we shouldn't do anything, we should have been real provoked. I do believe, Dick, we've got to do more than *mean* to do things, we've got to *do* them."

Dick said nothing, but he began to suspect that he was not quite as well able to govern himself as he had supposed.





CHAPTER VI.

CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS.

“MISSIS,” said Patty, one morning, after her lieutenant, Delia, had been sweeping and dusting the two large parlors, “Missis, please just come and look at these carpets.”

It was more trouble to say “no” than it was to say “yes,” so Mrs. Bland rose from her easy-chair and walked slowly into the drawing-room, through what was called the back parlor. The two rooms were large and handsome, and opened into each other by huge sliding doors of solid mahogany. A

heavy cornice ran round the ceiling, and nearly came down to meet the high mantel pieces of black marble, cheerful representations of Egyptian tombs, which the taste of the builder had thought an appropriate form for a family hearth. The walls were covered with a flowery paper in a running pattern, but it was faded and dim with age. The carpets had, in their day, been handsome brussels, but they had been purchased forty years before. They had come through a good deal of wear during Mr. Bland's life time, for he had been a social, bustling person, fond of company, and through the summer the house had been full of visitors. Since his death the rooms had been almost entirely shut up; and, in spite of Patty's care, the moths had made several attacks upon the old brussels.

“Well, Patty,” said Mrs. Bland, “what about the carpet?”

“Why, just look at it, Missis,” said Patty, opening the blinds, and throwing a flood of sunshine upon it. “It ain’t fit to be seen.”

“Then don’t look at it, Patty,” said Mrs. Bland, mildly, sitting down on the old sofa, and drawing her shawl round her, for the air had that creeping chill, common in disused rooms.

“Other folks ’ill see it if I don’t, Missis,” said Patty. “I felt real ’shamed for the credit of the family, the other day, when them gentlemen came to call on the Major, and Primus brought them in here to have ’em see such an old faded thing.”

“Well, Patty, I don’t suppose you can make the carpet new again. When things once grow old they stay so.”

“But, Missis, there’s plenty of carpets in the world besides these.”

“Are there? Where?” said Mrs. Bland, looking about her as if she expected to see the said carpet piled up somewhere about the parlor.

“Laws, Missis! in stores of course.”

“But they don’t belong to us, Patty,” said Mrs. Bland, who was uncommonly slow and sleepy that morning.

“Dear me, Missis, can’t you take some money and buy new ones,” said Patty, coming to the root of the matter.

“New ones!” murmured Mrs. Bland, dropping her head and looking very much like some soft, sleepy bird, just ready to put its head under its wing. “New carpets, Patty!”

“Yes, Missis, and have these rooms new papered, and put in order, and kept open; ’stead of being shut up all the time like a



vault," continued Patty boldly, suddenly exposing her whole design, the details of which she and Simeon had been planning for some time.

Mrs. Bland was quite overwhelmed with so many new ideas at once. "Really I don't know," she said, rising; "you had better ask Major Monroe."

"Why, Missis, the Major won't have anything to say about your house. He never takes nothing on himself, nor Miss Anne neither; but young folks like them," for in Patty's eyes Anne and the Major were young things. "Why it stands to reason they wants a little diversion, and to see people now and then, and folks wants to know 'em and see 'em; cause a real lady and gentleman like them is worth knowing, and how's they ever going to see folks with no place but the dining room and your room, and here's these two

great handsome parlors just kept shut up to 'commodate the moths and black beetles."

"But how should I get the carpets?" murmured Mrs. Bland. "I dare say Miss Anne could do that though," she added in a more lively tone.

"Course she could, Missis; Miss Anne's got good judgment."

"Very well then, ask her to be so good as to get the carpets the next time she goes to town. She needn't go down on purpose, but when she goes for herself."

"And the paper, Missis?"

"Ask Major Monroe."

"Shall I tell him you want him to get it, and 'range for the men to come and put it on?" asked Patty.

"Yes, if it won't be too much trouble; but I don't think he minds trouble much. When he was at the West he used to go

hunting bears, and I don't think it will be as hard to find the paper and the paper men; and Patty tell Primus to make some good fires in the grates here now. It feels so cool and damp," and Mrs. Bland went back to her own room quite exhausted with so much talking.

Patty carried her message up to the schoolroom where Anne and Will received it with considerable surprise, and went down to talk over the details with their aunt.

"Patty," said Diana, seizing upon the old woman, "is aunt going to have the parlors open and use them?"

"I 'spect so, Miss Di," said Patty, who was greatly delighted with the success of her attack.

"How nice that will be," said Dick.

"Yes, Master Dick, I think it will be rather a 'provement,' and Patty went

down to report progress to Simeon and Primus.

“Aunt,” said Anne, “I didn’t quite understand what Patty said about getting new carpets and paper.”

“Why, you see, my dears,” answered Mrs. Bland, rousing herself from her trance, “Patty thinks the parlors might as well be open and used, as kept shut up, especially now that you and Will are here, and people come to see you.”

“Dear Aunt Sophy,” said the Major, “I am sure I don’t want to put you the least out of your way on my account.”

“But it doesn’t,” said Mrs. Bland, who began to feel that there had been a good deal of sense in Patty’s remarks. “If you would not mind taking the trouble, Will; for really I am sure I never could do it myself, and, of course, you like to have your friends come to see you. Mr. Bland



always did, and if they come, you must take them somewhere, and the parlor is the proper place, and when Mrs. Leslie and other ladies come to see Anne they can sit in there, and leave me to my nap. I think it will be very convenient, and the carpets *are* worn; I suppose it is time; they were put down when I first came home, forty years ago."

"But, aunt, it will cost a good deal to get carpets for those two large rooms," said Anne.

"Very well, my dear, then you had better take a good deal of money."

"I am afraid, Aunt Sophy, you don't think how much it will all cost by the time it is done," said the Major, who saw how much the arrangement would add to his sisters' comfort, and yet hardly liked that his aunt should meet expense on their account.

“My dear, I have plenty of money; I am quite sure I have. I haven’t spent all my income, and I’ll tell you how I know,” said Mrs. Bland, settling herself in her chair. “Two summers ago—or was it three—really I don’t know, which was it, Anne?”

“What happened, aunt?”

“I am sure I can’t tell whether it was two or three. It was when the brindled cat was a kitten I know,” said Mrs. Bland, in a puzzle. “But whether it was in ’47 or ’48 I really cannot say; Patty would be able to tell, because she disliked her so much.”

“Disliked who, Aunt Sophy?”

“Your cousin Hamilton, when she visited here.”

“That was three years ago—in ’47, aunt,” said Anne; “because she came here from Darton.”

“Yes, so it was. Thank you, Anne, love. Well, she made me so uncomfortable, you can’t think, because she was always saying that I was being eaten up by drones; and, at first, I thought she meant the bees that got into the preserve closet once; but, finally, she said she meant Simeon, and Patty, and Primus, and Delia; and she said they were using up all that I had in the world, and that I should die in the poorhouse. I didn’t mind much at first, because it seemed so improbable; but, someway, she kept saying it over till I had to think of it, and it made me very uncomfortable at last, for I did not see, if I spent all my money, what was to become of Simeon, and Patty, and the horses, and the old cat. So I went one day and asked Mr. Parsons, who manages all my business, if it was

really true that I was using up everything, and he said it wasn't, and made it all out for me in figures how much I'd spent, and how much I had. I don't remember how much it was exactly, but I know there were more figures on the keeping side than there was on the spending one."

"Cousin Hamilton has the knack of worrying," observed Will.

"And then she kept telling me that I didn't want so many people about the house, and that a poor family might be kept on what I spent on Simeon and Patty, and that I ought to send them away, and do with one girl and a boy; but I didn't know any poor family to keep, and I *did* know Simeon and Patty, and Primus was their son, and he was born in this house. Simeon was Mr. Bland's old servant, and Patty



was here when I came; and, as for Delia, why Patty wanted some one to help her, and she was a poor, forlorn little thing, only ten years old when she first came, and she's never very strong. It always does seem as if God meant you should take care of people, you know; and I always give Mr. Leslie money when he asks for it, for any poor person. Really, Anne, you can't think how uncomfortable your cousin Hamilton made me while she stayed. I really was glad when she married that gentleman and went to Java—Java is a good ways off, isn't it, Will?" asked Aunt Sophy, hopefully.

"Yes, dear aunt," said Will, who was leaning over the back of his aunt's chair; "I am not sorry to say it is. Any one must have a cast iron disposition to tease you. But about these carpets?"

O! you and Anne can just go and get them when you go down to town."

"Hadn't you better choose them yourself, Aunt Sophy," said Anne; "I might not suit your taste."

"Ask your brother, my dear."

"And the paper must suit with the carpet. Really, aunt, I wish you would come with us," said the Major.

"You can ask your sister, you know. Just please yourself. You will save me a great deal of trouble if you only will do just as you like," and that was all that could be got out of Mrs. Bland in the way of direction.

"If this is to be done at all, the papering I mean," said Will, "it should be done directly, before the fall rains come on."

"Very well, do it to-day if you like," said Mrs. Bland, composing herself for a nap.

For the next month there was an upturning in the house which was delightful to the children. As usual, one repair made another necessary. Painters came with the paperers, and a varnisher after them. Mrs. Bland never paid the least attention to the matter herself, except to say as she was questioned, "ask Major Monroe," or "ask Miss Anne."

When the work was done Major Monroe sent for their own parlor furniture which was stored in Darton, and when it was arranged in the parlors where there was plenty of room for it, without crowding out the heavy old chairs and tables, the whole effect of the rooms was very pretty, and Simeon and Patty averred that this was something like living. Mrs. Bland, now that the work was done, was much pleased. She forsook her own little back room, where she had lived so long, and

only retired thither when she wished to take a nap, which, to be sure, was pretty often. She even went to the length of giving a dinner party, and Anne who had lived almost like a nun in a convent ever since she came to Menango, found herself to her surprise much sought after and called upon by the young ladies of the town, and invited out to evening gatherings and to tea parties. Menango was much given to morning calls, and somewhat to Anne's annoyance she found her day sadly broken by these visits, and the children's lessons interrupted.

One morning towards the middle of September the Major came into the school-room just as the lessons were finished, and asked the children how they would like to go to school.

"To school!" exclaimed Diana, opening her eyes wide, "away from home?"



"No, not farther than Menango," said Anne.

"Why, Will, do you really mean it?" said Dick, half pleased and half doubtful.

"Yes, Dick, I think we do," said Will, sitting down and drawing his brother towards him.

"But don't we learn as much of Anne as we should in school?" said Diana, perching herself on her brother's knee.

"A great deal more I have no doubt," said Will; "but Dick is growing a great boy, and both Anne and I think it would be better for you to be more with other children."

"But it will cost more, Will," said Dick.

"I know; but not so very much, and to tell you a secret, Anne has found a little gold fairy who has coined some silver six-pences for her out of old bits of paper."

"What do you mean?" said Dick,

but Anne only smiled, and would say nothing; and the Major was equally mysterious.

“But when are we to go?” asked Diana.

“Monday morning.”

“And this is Friday. How long have you known about it?” said Dick, feeling rather injured at having been kept in the dark.

“We only made up our minds last night, or you should have had longer notice. From all I can hear, Mr. Lyon, at the academy, is a very good teacher, and I liked him when I saw him.”

Dick looked rather doubtful. He had an idea that there would be a great difference between Mr. Lyon’s method and Anne’s.

“Dear me!” said Diana, “I shall be afraid of him; but, of course, I must

go if Dick does. John likes it there very well."

"So he tells me; so now run away, and make the most of your play time while you have it."

Will and Anne went down-stairs. Anne carrying Mrs. Bland's shawl, which she had just finished. Mrs. Bland was greatly delighted with it, and once more asserted her belief that Anne must be very clever.

Just then, however, came a carriage full of callers, and Anne went into the parlor to receive them, leaving Will and her aunt to follow at their leisure.

"I am so glad you lost that money, my dear, in the bank," said Mrs. Bland, looking up into Will's face; "because, you know, if you had not, Anne and the children never would have come here, nor you to stay so long, and it



is such a comfort to have you; and Anne has made me a shawl, and all."

"Dear Aunt Sophy," said Will, sitting down on a stool at her feet like a great boy, "I can't tell you how much I thank you for all your goodness to us."

"I don't see any goodness about it. I wish you would stay here all the time, and not go back to that dangerous western country. Every once in a while there is an Indian war, and then you might have to fight a battle, and that's unsafe; I am sure it is. Why can't you stay here all the time?"

"Because I must go where I am sent—being in the army—and because I must have my pay, you know, Aunt Sophy."

"But that is not so very much, and why can't you just as well take it of me as the Government?"



“Dear aunty, you are just as kind as you can be, but I couldn’t live on you in that way; and I don’t feel that I’m old enough to resign yet.”

“But you know all that I have belongs to me,” said Mrs. Bland. “Mr. Bland would leave it to me, and when people talked to him about it, he said I had more sense than people generally gave me credit for. And you and Anne are the nearest relations I have, except Cousin Hamilton, and she’s not very near, now she is in Java. Dear Will, I wish you would let me do something for you. You have been so good about overseeing the painting, and the paper and all.”

“You are doing for me all the while, Aunt Sophy,” said Will. “It is the greatest comfort in the world to think of Anne and the children being with you.”

“Anne is so nice and the children are such good little things,” said Mrs. Bland; “but now I suppose we had better go into the parlor. How fortunate it was that Patty thought of having the parlors opened. She is very clever, Patty is, very indeed.”

“Dick,” said Will to his brother when they were sitting together upon the porch that evening, “your Aunt Sophy is one of the dearest women in the world.”

“That she is, Will. She lets one do just what they like.”

“That’s a very good reason in your eyes I dare say,” said the Major, smiling; “but do you take care never to like to do anything that can make her uncomfortable. We owe her a great deal. Think how differently we should have been situated but for her, and of her unfailing kindness ever since we came,” and then Will

repeated part of that morning's talk with his aunt.

“I'm sure I wish you could stay, Will,” said Dick, sighing; “but of course we could not live on her in that fashion; but how good she is. O!” thought Dick to himself, “what a fool—and worse than a fool I was to talk about her as I did at Mr. Briggs’. I wish Osborne would never come home,” and then Dick looked up and saw Osborne coming up the walk.





CHAPTER VII.

A DISCOVERY.

“SAY, Dick Monroe,” called out Osborne in his coarsest, loudest voice, “I wish you’d just give me back them books of mine.”

Poor Dick! he held down his head and muttered something about finding them some other time, and not knowing where they were.

“Why, Dick, if you have borrowed books of Master Briggs, you must surely know where they are,” said his brother.

“I’ll be bound he knows where they are fast enough,” said Osborne, with a disa-

greeable laugh. "Any way I want 'em, so I wish you'd hunt 'em up, and the papers, too."

Dick vainly made signs for Osborne to be silent, as he rose reluctantly.

"I'll bring them up to your house this evening, Osborne," he said, "I meant to send them home before."

"No, I'll take them now; I'd rather; I'm going to have some fellows at our house to-night. I ain't ashamed to have any one know what books I read."

"I hope you have no cause, Master Osborne," said the Major, politely. "Go and get the books, Dick, and another time do not wait to have borrowed books sent for before you return them."

Dick departed reluctantly, but then he remembered that he could wrap them in a newspaper so that his brother would not see them.



He ran up to his own room and removed the chimney-board, which covered the fireplace in summer. Hardly had he done so when he heard his brother's step in the hall, and the next instant Will came into the room. The Major had not the least intention of playing the spy, he had come for his knife which he had left in Dick's room that morning.

"Why, Dick, that is a very odd place to keep books in," he said, still quite unsuspecting, and then seeing Dick's look of confusion and his sudden movement to replace the chimney-board, he added more gravely, "I am rather curious to see what sort of reading Master Briggs is fond of."

"O, don't Will," cried Dick. "Please don't," he said beseechingly, as Will picked up one of the books, whose coarse, gray paper, and hideous wood cuts, suited well with the matter of the letter press.



The discovery. Page 142.

“Surely, what you read cannot hurt me,” said the Major, as Dick tried to take the book out of his hand. He turned over the pages while Dick stood by in an agony, and then flung the book down as if it had burned him. “Is it possible that you have read this horrible stuff?” he asked.

“O, Will! I’ve never read a word of it since you came home—not a word,” said Dick, distressed.

“And these detestable papers with your name on them, and these low novels! It is a shame that such things should be printed in a civilized country, and not one of them is fit to come into a respectable house. And you must have known you were doing wrong to read them, or you never would have hidden them away from me. O, Dick! I thought I could trust you, and I certainly hoped you could me!”

“I didn’t mean to deceive you, Will,

indeed I didn't," said Dick, almost in tears, "but after you came home I never read a word of them, and I felt sorry and ashamed that I'd ever seen them, and I couldn't bear to have you know it. I know they are hateful things and I wish I'd never seen them; Osborne gave them to me in the first place, and I wish I'd never seen him either."

"Don't try to lay the blame on any one else," said the Major, sharply; "you knew better than to take such books. Dick, if you will tell me honestly you did not know they were wicked—perhaps you did not."

"I did, I did, Will," said Dick; "I ran away to read them, and read after I went to bed, and once when Aunt Sophy found me with that thing of Dumas', I said it was Masterman Ready; not that she'd have known about the other."

“So much the more shame for you to deceive her. Go and take those things,” said the Major, looking at the books with infinite disgust. “Go and take those things down to Osborne and then come back to me.”

Dick obeyed, put the books and papers together and went down to Osborne.

“I suppose that dandified brother of yours has been given you a blowing up,” said Osborne, sneeringly.

“If he did I deserved it,” said Dick, boldly. “We had no business to read such things, and I’ve been ashamed ever since I had time to think about it. Do burn them up and don’t read them any more.”

“Pshaw! as if there was any harm in a little fun. You’ve lived with your sisters and that old fool of an aunt of yours, till you’re just a great girl-baby yourself.”

“Osborne Briggs,” said Dick, in a passion, “if you talk so about my aunt I’ll knock you down.”

“O, dear! I’d like to see you do it! How long since you felt so?” said Osborne, rather drawing back nevertheless. “I wonder who made any more fun of the old lady than you did, at our house?”

“If I did I was a fool, and worse,” said Dick, vehemently, “and you led me into it; more shame for me! and if I ever catch you repeating any of that stuff you’ll see what you’ll get.”

This was a most unwise speech on Dick’s part, as it once showed Osborne the hold which he possessed over his former admirer.

“O! no, of course I won’t repeat it,” he answered tauntingly, “you may bet something on that. Suppose I just go into the house now, and tell them all about it,”

and then as he heard Anne's voice in the hall, he turned away with a threatening gesture, and left Dick to his own reflections, which were by no means agreeable as he slowly ascended the stairs and returned to Will.

"Have you ever shown any of these precious volumes to Diana?" asked the Major, as he entered the room.

"O, no, Will, of course I hadn't," said Dick, "and she wouldn't have had anything to do with them if I had. We found a book, I forget the title of it, up in the garret once, and she read a little of it and threw it out of the window, because she knew it was a hateful bad book, and she wouldn't read such stuff."

"I am glad Diana has so much sense. I wish you had."

"But, Will," said Dick, "isn't it different for a boy?"

“That is the idea with some but it’s not mine. It seems to me a young man needs the safeguard of a pure heart and imagination, even more than a woman, for he is more exposed to temptation. Did you ever hear that all the exhortations to purity of life in the Bible were addressed to women alone. Does St. Paul say, ‘Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, let the women think on these things. It’s different for men’? Is St. Peter speaking to women alone, when he tells his converts ‘to be holy in all manner of conversation’?”

“No,” said Dick, “but I didn’t think about that.”

“There was the trouble I suspect, Dick ; I would have given anything I have in the world, rather than have found those vile books in your possession, hidden away in that fashion, too.”

“But Will,” said Dick, rather timidly, “don’t you—I mean do you, ever read anything you wouldn’t want everybody to know?”

“I wonder if I have ever given you any reason to think me a liar and a hypocrite,” said the Major hotly, and he turned away and began walking up and down the room.

“O, Will, no, of course not. Please don’t be so angry with me,” said Dick, greatly distressed. “Only Osborne said all gentlemen did, and that officers were very different in garrison from what they were out.”

“Osborne is undoubtedly a judge of the manners and customs of gentlemen, and on *his* word you could believe that I was a humbug and a Pharisee. I don’t think I should have been so ready to believe lies about you.” Will stopped his walk up and down the room, turned away his face,



and stood looking out of the window trying to regain his composure, for he was both hurt and provoked.

“I didn’t believe it, Will, I didn’t,” said Dick, “not a minute after you came home. I don’t see what possessed me to run after Osborne, and to act as I did this summer. I’ve been dreadfully ashamed of myself ever since I really thought about it, and I wish, as much as you do, I’d never seen the hateful things, and I’ve tried to do right, and get my lessons, and be good to Anne and Di ever since that morning. Indeed I have, Will.”

“I think you have, Dick,” said the Major, softening; “but what troubles me most in the matter is, that you should be willing to be led by that fellow.”

“I’m sure I don’t see what possessed me,” repeated Dick.

“I can tell you, if you really want to

know; I greatly suspect it was self-will and conceit, and an idea that you were doing something fine and manly, because you were doing something you knew Anne would not like. Didn't you think yourself too grand to obey any one?"

Dick looked down, he was ashamed to say yes, and he was too conscious to say no.

"I was perverse," he acknowledged at last.

"I am afraid so, but I give you due credit for trying to do better. I have noticed it, and been glad to see it; but look here, Dick," said the Major, earnestly, "don't let any foolish talk, or mischief-maker come between you and me. I give you my word of honor that I have never read what I knew to be base and vile, or have I frequented bad or low company. I haven't always

resisted sin as I ought, I know, and my temper has led me into trouble more than once; but if I have been able, under God's grace, to resist, where some that I know have given way, it is owing more to Anne's influence than to anything else. It was her example and life that led me, in the first place, to call myself Christ's disciple, and you can have no better guide or adviser than your sister."

Will spoke with a good deal of emotion, and Dick was much moved, for his brother was generally slow to speak of his own personal feelings, and was more given to acting than to talking of his religion.

"O, Will! I *am* sorry," said Dick, now fairly crying; "and I didn't mean to deceive you exactly, only I was so ashamed to have you know what I'd

been doing; but I'll never read another book without asking you or Anne, if you say so, and I don't care what you do to me; I deserve it all."

"I'm not going to do anything to you," said Will, kindly, taking Dick's hand in his own, "only to tell you never to have anything farther to do with that boy. Will you remember?"

"Yes, indeed. I'm sure I don't want anything to do with him."

"See that you don't. If he says anything about it, tell him in so many words I told you not to play with him."

"And you'll forgive me, Will?"

"Yes, my boy—only give me your word to let Osborne, and his books, and his talk alone in future."

"I will, indeed," said Dick, fully meaning what he said. "I hope I'll

never be such a fool again; I'm sure I sha'n't."

"You can't be sure," said the Major; "and that is not the safest way either. There is only One who can keep you in the straight path, and he has given you a sure guide, if you'll only look to Him."

"I know, Will, and that was some more of Osborne's nonsense I listened to. He said only girls and milk sops said their prayers, or cared anything for religion."

"Don't you think Washington, and Oliver Cromwell, and William of Orange were rather men than otherwise?"

"I think I needn't have looked that far to see what stuff it was," said Dick, proudly. "I think I might have remembered how you brought off Sergeant May, after the Camanches had

got him, charging right into the middle of them all alone."

"Never mind that, Dick," said the Major, coloring, very much indeed like a girl; "and now I shall never say another word about this matter, only to ask you to remember when you are in school with all sorts of boys, that you must not be led into wrong doing for fear of a laugh. As to Osborne Briggs I trust your word, and now we had better go down stairs."

"I think I'll go to bed," said Dick; "I don't feel like talking."

"Very well, I'll make your excuses. Good-night, dear."

"I've got off a sight better than I deserved," said Dick to himself, when he was left alone. "Never say another word about the matter! I'll be bound he won't; that's one good thing about Will. He just comes down on you and done with it. He

don't keep *tagging* at a fellow all the while. I most wish I had told him how I talked about aunty; but after what she said this morning he'd have been so provoked and sorry, and she'll never know it. It's all over now."

But it was unhappily not all over. Dick said his prayers with much more than his usual sense of their meaning, and was soon sound asleep.





CHAPTER VIII.

GOING TO SCHOOL.

AFTER the children had left her for their first day in school, that Monday morning, Anne went up into the deserted school-room and cried. She felt it was right they should go, the plan had been her own to begin with, but still she felt lonely, and as if the little brother and sister, who had been her care so long, were going out from her into the world, and would never be what they had been before.

The children went down to the academy in the carriage with Will, chatting all the way until they came in sight of the

academy building, when they became suddenly silent. Diana squeezed Dick's hand in a state of excitement; not quite fear, but something a little like it, and yet not altogether unpleasant.

The academy was a large square brick building with faded green blinds. At some remote period it had been painted white, but the paint had peeled off in spots and streaks, giving it an agreeable speckled and mottled appearance. It stood in a large square enclosure containing several noble elms, and a few half-grown maples. School had begun, so that there was no one to be seen about the place, except one little girl in a pink sunbonnet, who was evidently late, and was in no hurry to enter.

"O, dear!" said Diana, to herself, "I wonder if I shall like it;" while Dick thought that there was a famous play-

ground, and wondered if John had ever climbed the tallest of those big oak trees.

There was a bell at the door, and Will's summons was answered by a tall, precise, prim-looking young man, whom you would have known for a school-master, if you had met him in the Arabian Desert.

In answer to Will's polite inquiry for Mr. Lyon, he made a bow of rather a wooden description, and ushered them into a little room where was a strip of carpet, two venerable globes, and a large book-case containing a variety of books well-selected and apparently much used.

Dick and Diana were reading over the titles when Mr. Lyon entered with the book he had been using in his hand. His entrance was so sudden, swift, and still, that the children opened their eyes and wondered whether he always went about like that.

Mr. Lyon was rather a small gentleman with a hook nose, a firm set mouth, a pair of bright, dark-blue, deep set eyes, under black brows and lashes, a wide, rather low forehead, which he had a habit of wrinkling up in an odd fashion, and a thick crop of iron-grey hair standing straight up on the top of his head.

“Good-morning, sir,” he said to Will in a sharp, quick, yet very courteous tone and manner. “I suppose these two are your young people. Good-morning, sir. Good-morning, ma’am,” and he made two little, swift bows to Dick and Diana, who were so altogether taken by surprise that they could only stand and look, first at Mr. Lyon and then at each other.

“Yes,” said the Major; “I am afraid you will find them rather ignorant about the way things are managed in school, for they have always studied at home, but as

far as they have gone in their books, they have been pretty well drilled by my sister."

"Doubtless, doubtless; I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss Monroe, a very superior young woman, very superior. What would you wish the young people to study?"

"We leave that to you, Mr. Lyon. You can tell when you have examined them what classes they are fit for."

"Yes, sir, certainly," and all on a sudden, almost without time to say good-bye to Will, and hear his whispered word of encouragement, Dick and Diana found themselves following Mr. Lyon up the much worn staircase into the large school-room, and standing beside him on a platform raised by two steps from the floor. The principal set a chair for Diana saying, "be seated ma'am," and then turned to



the class which was on a long settee before him, and which he had been hearing when interrupted. It was a class in higher arithmetic, and Dick began to have misgivings as to what sort of figure he should make in school, when he heard the rapidity with which questions were asked and answered. Meanwhile Diana, conscious that they were the mark for all eyes, held down her head, and wished Mr. Lyon would send her to her seat. She would have liked to have got hold of Dick's hand had she not been sure that it would annoy him, and then she felt encouraged as she caught a glance and smile from John, and another from Alice Vale, who was in her Sunday-school class. In a few minutes the boys and girls were dismissed, and returned to their seats in a very still and orderly manner.

“And what have you been studying,

ma'am?" said Mr. Lyon, turning to Diana, and half taking away her breath by the swiftness with which he spoke. Mr. Lyon addressed all his girl pupils as "ma'am," from the youngest little trot in the primary room, to the tallest young lady in the graduating class.

"Arithmetic once through, grammar, history and Latin, sir," Diana managed to say in a hurried half-whisper.

"Take time—take time, ma'am," said Mr. Lyon, kindly, for he was always willing to give time, though he never took it himself; "and you?" he added, turning to Dick.

"The same as Diana, sir."

"Very well. What Latin?"

"The reader, sir, and Cæsar; and we have been part way through the exercise book."

"Ah! indeed. Could you read Horace?"

"I don't know, sir; I never tried," said Dick, who felt it was rather a silly speech as soon as the words were out of his mouth, although he had not had the least intention of a joke.

"I think I shall let you try. We have no one in Cæsar at present, and your sister can go with the class that is just beginning Virgil."

Diana looked rather dismayed. She had taken it as a matter of course that she and Dick were to be together.

Mr. Lyon seemed to guess her thoughts, for he said, kindly,

"There are only large boys in Horace, and my Virgil class is too large already to admit you both. You will be together in your other studies. Do you know any one here, ma'am?"

"Yes, sir. We know John Graham and Alice Vale."

“Miss Vale has a vacant seat beside her; and Graham, please to come here a moment.”

John came, and looked with a smile at his two friends, as they stood shyly side by side.

“Do you care about keeping your present seat?” asked Mr. Lyon of John.

“No, sir, not much. I’d rather sit somewhere with Dick.”

“Very well. Smith can sit back where you are, and you and Monroe can take the two seats, of which he has one.” Dick straightened himself, and held up his head. It gave him a pleasantly old sensation to be called “Monroe.” “I will show you your seat, ma’am,” continued Mr. Lyon; and, with great politeness, he led Diana down the aisle, and placed her next to Alice, who received her with a smile and a kiss.

“He’s nice, if he is queer,” thought Diana. “It was kind in him to put us next to people we know.”

Ordinarily, Mr. Lyon would not have taken so much trouble, but he understood the shyness which the two home-bred children must feel among so many strangers. The change of John’s seat was soon made, and the business of the schoolroom went on.

“Did you ever keep up with a thrashing machine?” asked the boy directly behind Dick, as Mr. Lyon sped back to the platform.

“No sir,” said Dick, bewildered.

“Then you’ve got to now, that’s all.”

The oracular youth spake no more, but Dick pondered over his words that morning in the interval between his grammar lesson and the third one, to which he gave more study than he had ever given to any lesson.

The Horace class was the last in the morning session, and before it came he and Diana went up to the recitation room on the next floor to recite to Mr. McIntyre, the assistant. John and Alice went with them.

"Is Mr. McIntyre a school teacher?" asked Diana of John as they went up stairs.

"He ain't anything else," said John promptly, and when Diana found herself seated in front of Mr. McIntyre she felt that John was right.

Mr. McIntyre was a sort of teaching machine, and if he had only had machines to teach it would have been all right. He took a world of pains to make his pupils understand their lessons; he never scolded and never praised. He never seemed to care for his scholars *as* boys and girls, but simply as so many live creatures sent to

him to have so many dollars worth of facts put into them in the course of the term. As a matter of course the said boys and girls either cared no more for him than if he had been a wooden man, or regarded him with actual dislike. When Mr. Lyon left the school-house he was usually surrounded with as many of his pupils as could keep up with him, and Miss Spencer, of the primary department, walked encircled by a cloud of infants; but no one ever walked home with Mr. McIntyre. The young man himself supposed this to be a proof of his superiority.

“Have you the lesson, Miss Monroe?” he asked of Diana, in a tone so cold that she fancied she had offended him and could not think how.

“Yes, sir,” she answered.

“And you?” he asked of Dick.

“I think I can do the sums, sir,” replied



Dick, for the book was the same which he had used at home, and they were a few pages back of the last lesson he had recited to Anne.

Now Mr. McIntyre had a great contempt for all home teaching, and he fully expected to find Dick and Diana a pair of dunces. I do not know how it was that Dick knew what Mr. McIntyre expected, and felt a combative desire to disappoint him. The first question was worked out by Alice Vale, who stood at the head of the class; the next by John; but the next was passed down till it came to Dick who rose to go to the board, feeling quite confident that he could do the sum.

"If you are not sure you can do this," said Mr. McIntyre in the same cold tone, "you had better not go up. It only wastes time."

"*I am* sure," said Dick, rather bluntly.

Diana watched her brother breathlessly, and could have clapped her hands as the answer came right.

John and Alice looked at each other, and then smiled encouragement to Diana. Mr. McIntyre bade Dick explain the operation, which he was perfectly able to do, and then sent him back to his seat with the same coldness, which Dick, unused to such a manner, took as personal to himself.

“Miss Monroe,” said Mr. McIntyre, “can you do the next?”

Diana rose, blushing and trembling, and went up to the board, but Mr. McIntyre had not an encouraging tone or look for the nervous little girl making her first essay before strangers. He had no intention of being unkind, but he was obtuse and unsympathetic.

He gave her the question, and the figures

were correct, but she perplexed herself a little on the explanation, and though she made but one mistake, which she corrected, she returned to her seat feeling as if she had disgraced herself, and wondering how she could have displeased the teacher.

"Whatever did I do?" said Diana, almost in tears, to Alice as they went down stairs.

"Nothing, why?"

"Because Mr. McIntyre spoke to me so."

"Pooh!" said John, "never mind, that's only his way, he's always just so, he always acts just as if he expected you to miss, and so we're always bent on disappointing him, and learn for that reason."

"He don't mean anything," said Alice. "He is just so to every one. You did real well," and Diana went back to her seat rather consoled.

Then came the Latin; Diana trembled as she took her seat at the bottom of the long row of boys and girls. She was the smallest and youngest in the class, and very small and young she felt as the rapid questions and answers went on, and the parsing rattled so swiftly from the tongues accustomed to Mr. Lyon's quick ways.

"Have you read the lesson, Miss Monroe?" said Mr. Lyon to her, "or haven't you had time?"

"Only five lines, sir," said Diana, in almost a whisper.

"Very well, read and translate. Don't hurry, ma'am, there is time enough," said Mr Lyon kindly, thinking to himself, "Poor little thing! How frightened she is."

Diana began her translation in a trembling voice, but gathered self-possession as she went on, and was encouraged when she

stopped, by a "very well, ma'am; very correctly rendered," and then came the parsing which she dreaded; but she somehow found herself lifted on and along, and going fast without feeling hurried.

"Very well, ma'am; very good indeed. I see you have been well taught," said Mr. Lyon, in his quick voice, as Diana stopped, rather astonished to find how much more she knew than she had supposed.

Diana went back to her seat devoted to the principal. From that hour Mr. Lyon had no more faithful follower than herself.

The class in Horace consisted of a dozen boys, most of them almost young men, some of them quite grown; but Dick was surprised to find that the lesson was much easier than he had expected. He did not quite understand how it was, or suspect how much he

was helped, but he saw that Mr. Lyon waited for him as he did not for his companions, and resolved that he would lose no time in acquiring, as far as possible, that readiness and quickness which seemed to him so surprising. On the whole, the children went home well pleased with their first day in school.





CHAPTER IX.

SUMMARY JUSTICE.

IT WAS not many days before Dick and Diana found themselves quite at home in the academy; they ceased to feel embarrassed in class, and found less difficulty in keeping themselves in readiness for the swift question and answer, which, on review days especially, went flying down the class like a telegraphic message. They did not grow to like Mr. McIntyre any more than at first, but Dick had never taken more pains in his life to prepare his lessons, for he was convinced that his teacher

would have been pleased had he turned out a failure. I cannot say whether such was really the case, but Mr. McIntyre's unfortunate manner gave some warrant for such an idea. Diana, after a while, ceased to be embarrassed by his cold looks and tones; but her grammar and arithmetic, which she recited to Mr. McIntyre, and which with Anne had been her favorite studies, rather declined. On the contrary, Latin and history, under Mr. Lyon, went up several degrees.

The book on which the class was at that time engaged was that respectable old volume, "Pinnock's Goldsmith's Greece," but it was a mere pin to hold Mr. Lyon's lectures and illustrations, and he did not hesitate to pull the textbook to pieces, and treat its conclusions with scorn, if he thought proper. Mr. Lyon's aim was not merely to pass over



so many pages in a given time, but to make his pupils see and feel that the part was real, and its inhabitants living people. So the text-book really had very little to do with the recitations. The story was illustrated by extracts from larger works; by descriptions of character, manners and customs, so full of life, and so vivid, that John said he was sure Mr. Lyon must have lived in Athens, and fought the Spartans.

Just then the class had come to the story of the siege of Syracuse, and the whole school was divided into two parties, some sympathising with the Greeks and some with the Sicilians; some of them calling the Athenian commander "an old fool" in their indignation, and others pitying him for his misfortunes. The boys made models of the city, and the fortifications, in a sand heap in the play-ground, and each

party demonstrated to his or her satisfaction, that Syracuse could or could not have been taken. At the end of the pitiful story all the girls were in tears, the Syracusan party among the boys a little triumphant, and the Athenians "only wishing they'd been there" to fight the Sicilians and their Spartan allies, and all detesting Alcibiades, whom Mr. Lyon seemed to regard as a personal enemy, so severe were his denunciations and so hot his indignation against one whom John, in rather an Irish manner, described as "*a second Benedict Arnold.*"

Dick and Diana, who had always lived with people who read books and talked about them, and had early acquired a taste for reading, had the advantage of possessing more general information than their classmates, and could frequently answer questions and explain references

which the others did not understand. Diana being the youngest in her class and small of her age, was looked upon with some admiration, and received credit for more than she deserved.

Being in most of the same classes as the older girls she naturally fell into their company, and "little Di Monroe" was a great favorite, not only with the young ladies but with the boys. Withal Diana was more of a child than many girls of her own age, and rather scandalized Dick by the zeal with which she entered into children's pursuits, being quite as ready to build baby houses with little Nelly Adams, as she was to join Martha Dale, the tallest and most dignified girl in school, in a search through every available book to settle some vexed question arising from Virgil or their history. Dick was unspeakably mortified one morning when his

sister scattered some half-dozen paper dolls and their dresses out of the Æneid. The class smiled, and so did Mr. Lyon, but Diana smiled with them and did not feel at all disturbed. She was not at all ashamed of her dollies, and saw no reason why she should not play with them if she liked.

"I do wish, Di, you wouldn't be so silly," said Dick to her as soon as he could find her at recess.

"Why?" asked Diana.

"Playing with paper dolls just like a little girl."

"Well, I am a little girl," said Diana.

"Nonsense! you know what I mean. All the boys are laughing at you!"

"Are they?" said Diana a little troubled.

"O, Diana," said Harvey Grey, aged eighteen, and the tallest boy in school; "I say, Mr. Lyon wants us to find out all

we can about Ephesus, and Diana—there, your namesake.”

“She wasn’t,” said Diana, laughing; “I was named for my aunt. I don’t like Diana, the goddess, a bit. I think she was real hateful and cross; but what about Ephesus?”

“I wish you’d coach us a little. You’ll be sure to know more about it than any one else, or tell us some book we can find it in. There’s hardly anything in Lempriere.”

“Yes, do come, Diana,” said Ida Hart, a large, sleepy, blonde young woman of sixteen. “Dear! I wish I knew as much as you do.”

“O my!” cried Diana, “I don’t know anything but what Anne’s told me, and we read about Ephesus last Sunday, in a big life of St. Paul that used to be father’s. I’ll tell you all I can recollect, but I dare



say Dick knows more than I do about it," added Diana, who felt rather than saw that Dick was a little put out.

"I'm going to play ball," said Dick shortly, turning away, as Diana was carried off in the other direction to the library, where the best girls and boys of the class were "hunting" the given subject.

"Diana gets real conceited," thought Dick to himself, as he walked away. He could not help feeling rather vexed to find that his little sister was more popular than himself. There might indeed have been some danger of Diana's growing conceited, but that she compared herself not with her companions, but with Anne and Will. She was pleased to find herself liked and petted, and responded to it all with frank cordiality. Dick's little pet wore off before recess was over, and the praise which Mr. Lyon bestowed on him

in class, healed the little pain in his temper which Harvey had occasioned. Friday morning, when the whole school was exercised on geography and spelling, he answered two questions which Diana missed, and was in a very good humor. But unfortunately the afternoon renewed his vexation. Friday afternoon was a sort of festival in the school, as the period of what were called literary exercises; that is to say, the girls read such selections as they had chosen, the boys spoke "pieces" and dialogues, and then the principal read aloud those compositions which he thought most worthy the honor, always putting the best last. The compositions were read only every other Friday, as on the alternate ones the paper supported by the school was read aloud by the editor. Both Dick and Diana had had articles in the "Galaxy," as the paper was called, but

neither had yet attained to the distinction of composition day; for there were about a hundred papers a week, and Mr. Lyon never chose more than a dozen to read.

Diana had thought this honor as much out of her reach as the stars, but Dick's ambition was roused, and he took a world of pains with his compositions. Unhappily the more pains he took the more he ran into fine writing, which Mr. Lyon detested, and his papers were returned to him with the adjectives ruthlessly crossed out and the figures of speech cancelled. This week he had written an ambitious essay on "Passing Away." Mr. Lyon, who read about fifty-two themes a year on the same subject, marked Dick's with numerous corrections and returned it. Diana, who had been greatly interested in the Syracusan siege, and, like the rest of her class, had made notes of Mr. Lyon's lectures, wrote a

story about a child who had strayed beyond the city walls, and into the camp of the enemy. The little story was simply told and childish enough, but still there was a certain freshness and life about it that pleased Mr. Lyon. No one could have been more astonished than Diana when she heard the first sentence of her own composition, and when "Diana Monroe" was read at the end, she threw a quick glance across to Dick, expecting a look in return. But Dick was gazing out of the window, and seemed not to have heard or cared. It was Martha Dale, Harvey, John and Alice who congratulated her after school, but Dick did not say a word till they were driving home with Simeon. Then he did have the grace to feel ashamed, and to tell Diana that he thought her story was very good, and that he was glad Mr. Lyon read it, but he did

not quite recover from his little vexation by Monday morning, for Mr. Lyon's pencil had made very black and frequent marks on "Passing Away," and it was not possible but that the author should be provoked. Then John's composition had been read too, though Mr. Lyon prefaced it with the remark, that he read it not so much for the style as because it was short, and because he wished that the author and the whole school would act according to the concluding sentiment. John had no talent for composition whatever, and after beating his brain in vain for a subject, he had gone to Mr. Leslie, who had suggested "Things to be Done," upon which John had written as follows:—

"I am going to write about things to be done. There are a great many things to be done, some people have one thing to do and some another. Some men have pigs

to drive, it is very hard to drive pigs, pigs always want to go the other way. They go *into people's gates that they don't belong to*. Some scholars act very much like pigs.

“Some people have bridges to build, and sometimes rivers carry them off. Some people have books to write, others have to take care of babies. Some people work on a farm, and some people are in the army. Some things are very hard to do. If a person has got a hard thing to do, the best way is to find out the best way to do it, and then go at it and stick to it. This is all I have got to say about things to do.”

John joined in the little laugh which this essay raised in the school-room, and thought no more about it, his head being just then more full of a game of base-ball, which was to be played on Saturday, than of his studies.

Now, whether it was this game or whether it was something in the air, it is certain that the school on Monday morning was more "out of gear" than it had been for a long time. Many pupils were late, especially the older boys who belonged to the ball-club, and the lessons undeniably dragged. Mr. McIntyre up stairs grew colder and more impassive; and Mr. Lyon down stairs grew quicker and quicker, and Harvey Grey shook his head and warned his classmates that "the principal was getting up steam, and they'd better look out." Mr. Lyon and Mr. McIntyre were quite able to fight their own battles, but Miss Allen, who heard some of the junior classes, was not. She was a pretty, delicate young lady of nineteen, who had been a pupil only two years before. She was most anxious to do the best that could be done, and her



very anxiety stood in her way, for she allowed her pupils to worry her and make her nervous.

Some of her scholars found a malicious pleasure in distressing the sensitive girl. The principal always took her part in an energetic manner if he saw cause, but he could not be present at her classes, and if she were annoyed Miss Allen never complained. Dick admired the junior teacher greatly, and though he was in none of her classes, he took great pains to be polite and respectful to her. He could not help seeing her trials with some of her pupils, and they reminded him very uncomfortably of his treatment of Anne, during that fit of perversity which he now remembered with shame.

“Dear me!” he said to himself, “I wonder if I *did* look as silly and mean as these children do?”

This Monday morning it seemed as if the "imp of the perverse" had possessed Miss Allen's geography classes. They did not set her at open defiance, for the discipline of the school was too well understood, but they came as near to it as they dared. They missed questions which they knew perfectly well; they exchanged significant and contemptuous glances; they made noises with their feet; they dropped their books. It was but a few unruly spirits that engaged in this revolt, but the indignant glances of the better minded members of the class only made them more provoking.

Finally Matthew Wells, an over-grown backward boy of fifteen, one of the greatest dunces in the school, on being told to go to the map, said, insolently enough, he "didn't want to."

"That's not the question," said Miss

Allen, trying hard to control herself; "go to the map directly."

"I ain't a goin' to," said the boy roughly.

Even those who had been doing their best to torment their teacher looked at each other in some alarm at this speech. Such words had never been heard from one of Mr. Lyon's scholars before. Matthew, however, was new to the way of the academy. He had been the tyrant of a country school, and did not understand his present situation.

Poor Miss Allen! She had watched the night before with a sick child, and the want of sleep had increased her usual nervousness. She was silent a moment, in a vain effort to preserve her composure, and then burst into a fit of sobbing, the very worst thing she could have done under the circumstances.

Little Nelly Adams, the youngest

child, up-stairs, had watched the morning's work with ever increasing indignation, which now boiled over. She loved Miss Allen dearly, and reckless of anything but her distress, she sprang to the door of the class-room, and called out in her high, childish lisp,

"Misther Lyon! Misther Lyon! pleath come here and thee how the naughty boyth is abuthing my Mith Allen!"

A laugh ran through the schoolroom, but Mr. Lyon darted from the platform, and into the recitation room. A sudden silence fell upon the class, but poor Miss Allen could not so soon control the hysterical sobs which shook her from head to foot.

"What's the matter, ma'am?" asked the principal.

"I am very silly," said Miss Allen, in quivering accents.

“What is it, Miss Nelly?” asked Mr. Lyon, of the little girl, who answered Matthew’s threatening gesture with a glance of defiance.

“Pleathe, thir,” lisped Nelly, “he thaid ‘I won’t,’ when he wath thent to the map, and he and thome of them hath been behaving thshameful all the morn-
ing, and I think ith mean.”

“Did Wells say ‘I won’t’ to you, ma’am?” asked Mr. Lyon, with brightening eyes.

“Yes, sir,” said Miss Allen.

“Ask Miss Allen’s pardon instantly,” said Mr. Lyon, in tones that rang like steel on steel.

“I’m not goin’ to for you,” retorted Matthews, rather alarmed, but endeavoring to face the matter out.

Mr. Lyon flew at him, literally seeming to fly, and shook him much as a

terrier shakes a rat. Matthews was quite as tall and large as the principal, but the sudden swiftness of the attack crushed his powers of resistance.

"Will you ask Miss Allen's pardon now?" said the principal, with his hand on Matthew's shoulder.

"Yes 'ir," said the boy, in a breathless whisper, and not quite sure whether he stood on his head or his feet.

"Do it then."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Allen," said Matthews.

"Very well," said Mr. Lyon, retaining his hold of the offender. "Is there any one else who won't go to the map?"

But the class was mute as so many mice.

"You had better go home and rest, ma'am," said Mr. Lyon to Miss Allen, who, in the tenderness of her heart,

would have interceded for Matthew. "You are tired out. Miss Dale shall hear your classes, and you need not come this afternoon. Good-morning, ma'am," and he opened the door and bowed the weeping teacher out. "Miss Nelly, please ask Miss Dale to come here. You have done perfectly right, and I thank you, ma'am. Miss Dale," he continued, as Martha entered, "will you oblige me by hearing Miss Allen's classes to day. If you meet with the least trouble, please to tell me directly. Wells, do you come down into the library with me."

What came to pass in the library no one knew, but Matthew presently reappeared with a very red face, and pointed out all the places on the map to Martha with great meekness.

— Now I am aware that according to



late discoveries all the finer feelings of Matthew's mind ought to have been crushed, and that, going to ruin in after life, he should have dated the beginning of his downward course from the time when physical force instead of moral suasion was employed in his case. But the fact is, that the sense of having found his master, had a great effect in developing finer feelings in Matthew's mind than any one had supposed him to possess, and certainly much better manners. So, far from cherishing a secret and bitter dislike for the tyrant, who had mastered him by brute force, Matthews conceived a respect for his teacher, such as he had never felt for any one, and which did him a world of good.

"We haven't had such a row on the premises," said Harvey, in recess—

“not since Osborne Briggs was here. But wasn't it a spirited thing in little Nelly? What a little brick she is!”

“Somebody must look out, to see that Wells don't pay her off in some way for telling,” said John.

“He won't if I'm round,” said Dick; “but what about Osborne Briggs?”

“O! never mind that old story now,” said John.

“Why, you see,” said Harvey, “Osborne used to bully the little boys; and, one day, he was teasing Sammy Brent——”

“What! That little lame fellow? How mean!”

“Wasn't it? and John told him to quit, and he wouldn't; and then John put Sam behind him, and told Osborne he shouldn't touch him, and Osborne struck John, so then they got into a

regular fight, and some of the girls were scared, and called Mr. Lyon; but before he came John had given Osborne a most an awful thrashing, because he got very mad. Didn't you, John?"

"I don't remember much about it," said John, coloring. "I know I got a black eye."

"And when Mr. Lyon came he stopped it mighty quick, because he's down on fighting; and, if it had been for any other reason, they'd have both caught it, but when he heard the story, he said John had done just right, and made Osborne beg little Sam's pardon, and Osborne said the big boys always did such things in English schools, and Mr. Lyon said he should suppose from what he seen that prize fighter's manners and customs must prevail, at least, in some institutions, but that this was an

academy for gentlemen, and he begged him to remember it in future. That for the present he had got as much as he deserved, but that if he ever knew of his abusing the little ones again he'd have to answer to him. You see, Mr. Lyon had spoken to him about it once before, and borne with him more than he would with one of us, because he was such an untaught sort of a cub. After that he was mighty careful what he did in school, but do you believe, he lay in wait for little Sam one night, and ran away with his crutches, so the poor child couldn't stir a step."

"How mean! How shameful!" cried one and another.

"Wasn't it! And you know he lives at that little house way down the river, such a lonely road, hardly any one passes there. And the poor little fellow sat

—
crying there two hours in the rain before any one found him and took him home to his mother; and she a poor widow too. Well, Sam was sick for two weeks after it, but the next morning after it happened Mrs. Brent came down in a great passion, as well she might be, and told Mr. Lyon the whole story. Mr. Lyon called him up and dismissed him from the school, for he said he wouldn't have such a boy among his other pupils, so Osborne left suddenly and no one cried about it. He'd had shame enough, and he'd done other things before."

"So," thought Dick to himself, "no wonder he keeps out of John's way. O, what an uncommon fool I have been!"

"I told Matthew he'd catch it, if he didn't mind himself," said John. "He thought all that was smart. If I

wouldn't be ashamed to tease a poor little thing like Bell Allen !”

“He told a long story the other day,” said Dick, “about how he used to act with the teacher when he went to the district school.”

“Yes,” said John, “and I told him he talked very much like the man in the song :

“ ‘ Father and Tom and I,
And two or three neighbors more,
Whipped an old woman stone blind,
That couldn't see much before.’ ”

“I thought if he tried on that game with Mr. Lyon he'd see sights,” said Dick. “But does he often fly out like that ?”

“No, very seldom ; but when he does fly out, it's best not to stand in the way.”

“There goes the bell. I say, Dick, have

you got your Horace. I'm not a bit sure about mine," said Harvey.

"No more am I; I didn't look up the allusions as he told us," said Dick, in some alarm, as he remembered how he had gone fishing Saturday afternoon, and had "forgotten" in the evening. The older boys had been at the ball play and of course had not given the usual time to their lessons, having merely translated the ode, and trusted to luck for the prosody, parsing, and those "allusions" about which they were sure to be questioned. Dick was besieged for information as they hurried into school, but he had not much to give.

"Do tell me who the Centaurs were," said John Burke. "I know, but I've forgotten."

"Folks with horses' heads," said Dick, making a slight mistake in his hurry.

“And the Japithæ? Dear me, I wish they were all in Guinea! Who were they, Dick?”

“Mercy knows; I don’t now, if ever I did.”

“And, whatever were the ‘things concealed under different leaves,’ and what did they do it for?” asked Isaac Le Blanc.

“I don’t know, I’m sure; I wish to goodness they’d staid concealed,” said Dick, as he entered the schoolroom, and cast a longing glance at the classical dictionary, which it was now too late to consult.

Nobody knew who Catilus was, and the first four lines were rather blundered, but Mr. Lyon remembered the ball play and kept his patience, and only passed the lesson on when Ellery Vane translated “poverty” into “a pauper,” and rendered “hard service” by “a heavy militia man.”

The question who were the Centaurs came to John Burke, and he answered with promptness, "people with horses' heads."

"Really," said Mr. Lyon, "you have made a discovery."

Dick held his book before his face to hide his laugh, and then was struck with dismay as he remembered that he had indeed answered John's question with those words.

"It was I told him so, Mr. Lyon," he said; "I know it's wrong end first, now, but I was in such a hurry when he asked me."

"Very well, it's not Burke's miss then," said Mr. Lyon, pleased with Dick's honesty in the matter; "go on, Grey."

But Harvey for once made a terrible mess of his translation, and though Dick who followed him did rather better, he

knew none of the allusions. The memory of the class seemed to have undergone paralysis, for not a soul could tell anything about the different names of Bacchus, and the "things concealed under different leaves" remained concealed as far as the class was concerned. As for the scanning it was nowhere; in short, nobody knew anything. Hoping that they would do better on the review, and longing for a good recitation, Mr. Lyon turned back a few pages, and questioned them on a lesson they had been over, but all in vain. That unfortunate Monday morning, some bird of the air seemed to have carried away every seed of knowledge ever sown in the Horace class. Mr. Lyon bent his brows, but he found no fault in words until the question came up, "what was an augur?" Not a boy in the class but had been told or knew, but for some reason not

a boy in the class could think; or, if he thought, could say.

“Bother!” thought Dick. “I know as well as I know my own name, but I can’t get hold of it.”

“Surely you must know,” said Mr. Lyon. “John Burke, what was an augur?”

“It’s a thing you make big holes with, sir,” said John, confidently.

Mr. Lyon shut up his book sharply. “This is disgraceful!” he said. “It is perfectly disgraceful!” and then he rose to his feet, and with a voice like a cymbal, called aloud, “Miss Monroe! Miss Diana Monroe!” Diana started up, wondering what she had done, while the whole school suspended work and waited to see what would come next.

“Have the goodness to come here, Miss Monroe,” and Mr. Lyon led her up on the platform with great politeness, and to her

amazement seated her in the big chair by his side.

It is impossible to say how very small Diana looked in this situation. Her feet hardly touched the floor, and she held down her head till her long black curls falling forward almost hid her blushing face. She knew that every one was looking at her, and she wondered what in the world Mr. Lyon meant by sitting her up on the platform in Mr. McIntyre's chair.

"Will you have the goodness, ma'am," said Mr. Lyon, "to tell these young gentlemen what an augur was?"

Diana wished with all her heart that she could have said, "I don't know, sir," and wondered how Dick could have forgotten what he knew perfectly well, and what Mr. Lyon had told them in the history class. In a very low voice she answered the question, and in a few words

as possible; but as it happened Mr. Lyon's talk was fresh in her mind. She had been reading "Probus" only the day before, and such ideas as came to her out of stories she was not apt to forget, and she could not but answer all Mr. Lyon's questions. The class looked on, half wondering, half admiring, and half in a state of suppressed giggle, to see so small a child acting as professor to a class of big boys.

"Thank you, ma'am," said Mr. Lyon, as Diana answered, and turning back to the lesson, he added, "Perhaps you can explain this allusion. What does this concealed under various leaves refer to," and he translated the whole passage for her benefit. Now Diana did understand the reference, but as may be supposed she owed her knowledge to no study of the subject, but simply to having read in an

old "Token" a story called "The Golden Basket Bearer."

"Please, Mr. Lyon," said Diana, imploringly, "I only read it in a story."

"Well, let us know what you read in the story, ma'am," said Mr. Lyon, who felt that his rash experiment might easily have been a failure, and was grateful to Diana for carrying it through.

Thus exhorted, Diana managed to say that the mysterious things in question were the sacred symbols of the god, which were carried in the procession in baskets covered with ivy and vine leaves.

"Thank you, ma'am; thank you," said Mr. Lyon, and he at length released Diana, who went back to her seat with a crimson face, and put her head down on her desk, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

"There," said Mr. Lyon, emphatically,

to the class; "I wish you had all improved your time as well as Miss Monroe—at her age, too."

"Please, sir," said John, very mildly, "Miss Monroe's never been to school."

Mr. Lyon looked sharply at John, who kept a very sober face, though he had a certain twinkle in his eye.

Both teacher and class broke into a laugh.

"Go back to your seats," said Mr. Lyon. "We will take this lesson over to-morrow; and, boys, I hope there is no ball play this afternoon?"

"No, sir," said Harvey; "and, if there is, we'll tend to the lesson first;" and the recitation, which had begun so ominously, ended in renewed good-humor.

The boys were a set of good fellows, and bore no ill-will or jealousy to Diana

on account of this scene. But, when school was dismissed, "Miss Monroe" was discovered in tears.

"O, great Artemis! what is the matter?" said Harvey.

"I'm so sorry!" sobbed "the infant phenomenon," as she was sometimes called. "I wouldn't have known it if I could help it. I felt so ashamed."

"Pooh!" said John. "It is we who ought to be ashamed. Don't you cry, Di. I'm sure nobody feels a bit put out at you. We ain't so small as that."

"No, indeed," said John Burke. "I wish I'd come to you before the class—but, oh! you *did* look so small on the platform, with your little feet just touching the floor, and your curls all over your eyes."

"I only knew it because I'd read it in a story," said Diana, wiping away

her tears, a little consoled; "but I'll never read anything again, if it ends in my being poked up in Mr. McIntyre's big chair to talk to the big boys."

"Well, you are better natured than your namesake, any way," said Harvey; "and, as for your being in Mr. McIntyre's place, I'd a sight rather recite to you than to him. What a jolly little professor you'd make!"

"But what a mess we made of it," said John. "I say, Burke, how's the heavy militia man?"

"That's not so bad as a boy in Darton College," said Diana. "He translated 'Regina e speculis,' 'the queen through her spectacles.'"

"Well, I knew what an augur was perfectly well," said Harvey, "only I seemed to forget everything I'd ever heard of this morning. I don't believe

I could have said my A B C; but how did it happen you couldn't answer the questions better?" said Harvey to Dick, who came up just then.

"I'm sure I don't know," said Dick, rather crossly. "Diana, the carriage is waiting."

Diana knew in a moment that Dick was vexed with her, and her heart sank. She put on her bonnet and cloak in silence, and went out to the carriage. Dick never spoke a word to her till they had crossed the covered bridge, then he said,

"I suppose you feel very grand about what happened this morning."

"Grand! O, Dick, I felt so ashamed! But how was it you couldn't tell when Mr. Lyon asked you?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Dick, crossly. "One can't always think of

everything, but I tell you what, Diana, I think it was putting yourself forward in a very unbecoming way for a girl, and I don't believe Anne would have liked it at all."

"But, Dick, I didn't put myself forward," said Diana, beseechingly. "How could I help coming when Mr. Lyon called me, and I couldn't say I didn't know when I did."

"Mr. Lyon makes a perfect fool of you," said Dick, not answering her question. "Osborne said he had his favorites, and it's a good thing for you you are one of them."

"O, Dick! I'm not. Please don't be cross," implored Diana. "You know I couldn't help coming, and as to what Osborne said about Mr. Lyon I shouldn't think you'd want to quote him after what Harvey told you this morning."

“There ain’t no use believing a word that Osborne Briggs says,” said Simeon. “He’s a regular liar, and the less you have to do with him the better, Master Dick. ’Pears to me like you was in kind of a temper. Don’t you go scoldin’ your little sister, dar. You’re too big a boy for that.”

“O, Dick’s not scolding, Uncle Simeon,” said Diana. “He’s only a little worried; I think everything went wrong in school this morning.”

So Dick said no more and tried to control his ill-humor or rather its expression, but for some time he was secretly vexed at Diana, whenever he remembered that morning scene, and the “things concealed under various leaves.”



CHAPTER X.

CHRISTMAS TIMES.

IT WAS drawing near Christmas time. That year the holiday fell on Monday, and school closed for a two weeks' vacation the Friday before.

The children had been promised a Christmas party by Aunt Sophy, and as Dick wished to invite all the boys in the academy, and Diana all the girls, the list was a long one. Anne would have shortened it a little, but Aunt Sophy had begged that the dear children might have their own way entirely, and expressed her fears that any one left out might feel

hurt. "Besides," said Mrs. Bland, "it is just as easy to make plenty of things while you are about it, as it is to make a little." So the list was not shortened by a single name, and Dick and Diana were happy.

"Seeing that you have asked the whole institution," said Will, "why don't you ask the teachers too?"

"O, that would be fun!" cried Diana. "I dare say Miss Allen and Miss Spencer would come, and very likely Mr. Lyon, and I'm almost sure Mr. McIntyre will refuse, so I can be civil to him, you know, all the same. Well, Will, I *don't* like Mr. McIntyre, and I just can't help it, and what's more I don't believe you liked him either that evening he was here."

"I dare say he is a very excellent young man, Di," said the Major, smiling.

“But don’t you think it’s a great pity that excellent people should be so disagreeable sometimes? You feel as if you ought to like them and you can’t, and the more you can’t, the more you don’t like them. I’m not going to be in any of Mr. McIntyre’s classes next term—I’m real glad.”

“I can’t say I very much wonder, my little sister,” said Will, suppressing a yawn, as he remembered the evening he had spent trying to entertain Mr. McIntyre. That young gentleman never for one moment laid aside the school-master; any talk or reading that was not what he called “directly instructive,” that is, did not consist of the hardest, driest facts, presented in the stoniest manner, he thought unworthy of rational beings. His own conversation consisted either of simple statements of such “fax” as he was pleased

emphatically to call them, or in asking such questions as—"What is the easiest mode of adding a column of figures?" "What is the inclination of the earth upon its axis?" "Why is it colder in winter than in summer, if the earth is nearer the sun?"

This last problem he put forth to the Major at Mrs. Bland's tea-table. Will had replied gravely that "it was generally supposed that the sun was colder in winter, and didn't give out so much heat."

Mr. McIntyre had informed him that he was mistaken in that supposition, and had elaborately explained the matter to him, thereby throwing Dick and Diana into fits of suppressed laughter. Will had listened attentively to the explanation, and Mr. McIntyre used in after times to tell this story as proof of the superficial education given to army officers.

Mr. McIntyre being asked did decline to come, but Miss Spencer and Miss Allen gave a smiling assent, and Mr. Lyon made Diana a bow and said, "Thank you, ma'am."

"But you will come, Mr. Lyon, won't you?" said Diana eagerly, detaining him as he was about to take flight from the academy steps. "We shan't have half so much fun without you."

"Yes, ma'am; certainly, ma'am; very much obliged," said Mr. Lyon, who was fond of Diana, and the next instant, as it seemed, he was half way down the street.

That Friday morning, however, Diana did not go to school. The weather which had been bright, clear, and cold, had turned grey, damp, and sloppy; and the snow which had lain two feet on a level for a month, was running fast away under an untimely thaw. There was a raw,



chilly wind, and, as Diana had a little cold, Anne thought it best for her sister to stay at home. Diana acquiesced the more readily in her decision, as nothing in particular would be done on breaking-up day, and she had a new magazine to read.

Dick left her lying most comfortably on the parlor sofa, with her book, and the great brindle cat, old Tom, who was very fond of her, and liked nothing better than to lie in her lap.

As there was no one but himself, Dick preferred to ride to school on Pick the pony, and carried his dinner with him.

Mr. Lyon expressed his concern at hearing that Diana was not well, and accepted the excuse for her absence. School was dismissed earlier than usual on the last day, and with laugh and shout and song, mutual good wishes for the

season, and multitudinous chatter, the academy broke up for the vacation; not a pupil but heartily wished Mr. Lyon a merry Christmas as he sped up the wet, sloppy street, surrounded by a group of the older pupils, and carrying in his arms little Bessie Baker, the youngest in Miss Spencer's "primary," and the baby of the school, whom he set down, dry and warm, on her father's steps, with a bow, and "a good afternoon, ma'am. I wish you a merry Christmas."

But Bessie threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Wish you *whole lot*, Mr. Lyon," she said, emphatically.

In the meantime Dick was cantering homeward on Pick, feeling well pleased, as he had a right to do, on finding that his sister and himself were among those "perfect for the quarter," and in a hurry

to tell the good news to Diana, and Will, and Anne, and to Aunt Sophy who, as he knew, would be delighted, though she would not have the least idea what the honor really implied. Dick had grown very fond of his Aunt Sophy, and thought with great shame on those unhappy days, when he had mimicked her at Mr. Briggs. He had almost forgotten Osborne's threat, and Osborne himself, in the interest of his school life. The boys had not met since Osborne had come after his books, and, if they had passed one another, nothing but an unfriendly nod had been exchanged between them. As Dick drew near home, however, he met Osborne face to face in the road. He bowed slightly, and turned Pick to one side to allow him to pass.

“Look here, Dick Monroe!” said Osborne, stopping him, “I want to know if you

think you're going to ride over me with your confounded airs, because you've got a pony, and I'm on foot? I won't stand it from you nor no one else. Do you mean to cut me? I just want to know if you do? Because if you don't, it's all right, and if you do—I'll just walk straight back to your place, and tell them all about some talk of yours, before you set up to be such a good boy. I wonder you ain't afraid of dying, you're so awful nice and pious."

Now Dick's goodness, such as it was, was by no means of an alarming kind or degree. He made no reply at first, and jerked the bridle out of Osborne's hand.

"O, very well!" said Osborne; "I'm going your way then. I do hate a hypocrite, and I'll just see you get what you deserve. *You* cut me indeed!"



For a moment Dick thought of letting Osborne do his worst, and telling him in so many words that the Major had forbidden their intercourse.

“But then he will go and tell,” thought poor Dick, “and just now, when it’s Christmas, and I’ve done so well in school and all!”

Pride, not fear of punishment, conquered Dick’s better impulse.

“I don’t mean to cut you, Osborne,” he said, impatiently, “but I do wish you would stop bringing up that old story; it’s all over now, and a fellow don’t always want to be reminded how he made a fool of himself.”

“Nor want his folks reminded either,” said Osborne. “Very well! I won’t tell, not unless you provoke me. How do you get on in school?”

“Pretty well,” said Dick.

“Well, it’s a miserable school,” said Osborne. “Old Lyon don’t know enough to teach A B C, and they’re the hate-fullest set there I ever saw! *I* wasn’t going to school with a lot of girls any way, so father took me out.”

Dick laughed, though he felt vexed and uncomfortable.

“Took you out!” he said; “are you sure about that? How’s Widow Brent and little Sam?”

Osborne colored furiously.

“So! John Graham’s told you that lie, has he? If I don’t thrash him when I see him!”

“Do by all means, if you can,” said Dick. “But it was a real mean trick in you.”

“Pooh! I only did it for fun. Who cares for a little beggar like that? He wasn’t a pin the worse.”

“He was, too. He was sick ever so long. It was a regular mean shame!”

“O dear! Tommy good boy! How long since you felt so? But come, Dick, don’t let’s quarrel,” said Osborne, following Dick into the stable yard. “See how high the river is getting! Come down to the water a few minutes with me.”

Unhappily for himself Dick knew that the Major and Anne were not at home, having gone some miles down the valley to make a call on some acquaintances of their aunt’s.

“Will’s gone to Judge Bradley’s,” thought Dick, “and I wont ask *him* into the house, *that* I wont, and I can’t tell him to go home, or go off and leave him. One hates to be a bear.”

Dick was placed in rather a difficult situation, but he should have remembered his word of honor given to his brother;

— — — — —
told Osborne in so many words that he had promised to play with him no more, and gone into the house.

But after putting Pick into the stable, for Primus had gone to the village, and Simeon was with Anne and Will, he followed Osborne reluctantly to the water's edge.

In the meantime Diana, who had heard the pony come in, wondered more and more why Dick did not make his appearance. She had read all she cared to read, and played with Tom till she was tired. She wanted to hear their report for the quarter; to know what had gone on in school. She had received a letter from John's mother telling her of the safe arrival of the baby's blanket, and how the baby had worn it at her christening, when she had received the name of Diana Monroe. Diana had been greatly

pleased with her letter; she had read it to Aunt Sophy, who had been mildly interested; she had gone into the kitchen and read it to Patty and Simeon, who had been greatly delighted; and she had told the story to Tom, who pawed lazy satisfaction, but whether at that or the fire is uncertain.

Now she longed for Will and Anne to come home, and, as it grew darker, she could not understand why Dick did not come in.

Mrs. Bland was having a nap in her own room. Patty was busy in the kitchen with preparations for the party, and Diana wanted some one to talk to. She went to the back window and looked out, but could see nothing of Dick.

"I'll just run out and look for him," said Diana to herself, for her cold was better, and she thought there was no

harm in going out for a few minutes. She wrapped herself warmly, and put on her hood, and taking Tom in her arms, by way of a muff, went off towards the stable. Tom, big cat as he was, had a passion for being carried. He could clear a board fence, six feet high, at a spring if he chose, but he would sit mewing piteously at the foot of the stairs for some one to carry him up. He ranged over the roofs from the highest to the lowest; but would beg with a most helpless expression to be put up on a chair. Diana had indulged him to a great extent, and he made her the slave of his whims, greatly to his own satisfaction. He would stand at the top of the barn ladder, which he had ascended at two jumps, and call to Diana to bring him down and she did it, though Will laughed at her for climbing a ladder to help down a cat. Wher-

ever Diana was, there Tom was sure to be, and as she went out she took him in her arms from mere habit, and he put his head on her shoulder, purring complacently at his own excellent success in governing his mistress.

She went to the stable, but could see nothing of Dick. She heard voices from the bank below, and looking out of the barn window, she saw Dick and Osborne Briggs by the river side. They were amusing themselves by throwing sticks and stones at the pieces of floating ice that now and then came down the stream.

If the missile settled upon the cakes without sinking them, it made a mark by which they could be distinguished on their course down the current, and their speed compared. Dick, who had at first cared for nothing but to get rid

of his companion, had become engaged in the sport, and the excitement of the race between his bit of ice and Osborne's.

"Dear me! What a nuisance! There is Osborne Briggs again! I know what he's after," thought Diana, shrewdly to herself. "He wants Dick to ask him to our party, but he won't, not if I know it; I'll go down, and perhaps he will go off. I know Dick promised Will he'd have nothing more to do with him."

Still carrying lazy old Tom in her arms Diana pushed her way down to the river side by the path which Simeon had shovelled, and which was slippery with half-frozen snow and water.

"Dick," said Diana, rather timidly, after a cool, but polite notice of Osborne, "it's most tea time."

"I'll come in a minute, Di," said Dick, "only I want to see which piece beats,

mine or Osborne's. That's mine way ahead, with the stick on it."

Diana stood a moment or two, chilly and impatient, and expecting every minute to see Simeon drive the horses into the barn yard, or to hear Will's voice call them.

"And he'll be provoked at Dick," thought Diana, "and I can't bear to have a fuss. O dear! I wish that boy was in Egypt." Osborne knew very well that Diana wanted him to go home. Indeed she was never very well able to hide what she felt, and her knit forehead, her anxious face, and the impatient tap of her little foot, all said "I wish you'd go," as plainly as if she had spoken the words.

For this very reason Osborne was determined not to go, and began to think how he could tease Diana.

"Ho!" said he, "what a great, ugly,



lazy cat! I dare say it never caught a mouse in its life."

"He did," said Diana, indignantly; "he caught a big rat only yesterday, and another in the barn this morning, and brought it in to show to Patty. Didn't you, Tom?"

Tom, who would always answer when spoken to, made a comfortable little noise between a mew and a purr.

"Look there, Dick!" said Osborne, "there's another big piece coming along, close in shore too. If we can put something on that we can see it ever so far."

"Please come in now, wont you, Dick?" asked Diana, earnestly, "I've got something I want to show you."

"O yes! Go with its little sister! Do!" said Osborne, in a whining baby tone. "You've got to do just as she tells you, haven't you? I heard how old Lyon stuck

her up before the whole school when your class didn't know their lesson. What did old Lyon give you for it, sissy? Say?"

"I don't know any such person," said Diana, with flashing eyes, and all the dignity she could assume. "Dick, I think you've forgotten what Will said."

If it had not been for this unlucky reference of Osborne's, I think Dick would have gone into the house, but the speech renewed his little jealousy of his sister, which he had almost forgotten, and he felt that he could not let Osborne suppose Diana governed him.

"Forgotten what Will said!" repeated Osborne. "Fore I'd be ordered about by my own brother, and bossed round as you are, if he is in the army and thinks himself a big man!"

"He doesn't either!" said Diana, much excited. "I should think you'd be ashamed.

Please to let my cat alone," she added, drawing herself up, for Osborne had begun pulling Tom's ears and tail, and taking liberties with him, to which Tom responded by an angry switching of the abused member, and, as Osborne repeated the insult, he turned like lightning, and striking fiercely with his big powerful paw, left a deep bleeding print of all his talons in Osborne's hand.

"Nasty, treacherous brute!" said Osborne, shaking the wounded hand.

"It served you right," said Diana. "You needn't have teased him. Dick, do come, please."

"Run in, Di, I'll come in a few minutes. I just want to see that big piece of ice go down," said Dick. "It's coming close in shore," and, seeing that there was nothing near which he could put on it for a mark, he ran up the low bank for a bit of bark.

The ice cake drew nearer and nearer. It was a thick and solid piece, larger than any they had yet seen; Diana and Osborne stood watching it. It was passing about a foot from the shore. Dick was still above them searching for a stick.

“Here’s something better than anything you’ll find,” said Osborne; and snatching Tom from Diana’s arms, he threw him into the middle of the ice cake.

“My cat! My cat!” screamed Diana. “Pussy! Pussy!”

Tom could have jumped on shore very easily, but afraid of the water he only held up one paw, and mewed piteously.

“O, he’ll be drowned!” sobbed Diana, and, without a thought of anything but her favorite’s danger, or waiting for Dick to come down the bank, she sprang on the ice cake herself, all but falling into the water as it tipped with her weight. In

that instant Tom had run to the other side of the raft, and Diana went after him, slowly and cautiously on the wet slippery ice.

“Diana! Diana!” called Dick and Osborne at once, “come back. You’ll fall in!”

Diana had reached the cat, and holding him in her arms turned to come back. She stopped with a cry of dismay. The narrow channel, over which she had sprung, was now six feet wide, and the stream was sweeping the ice cake swiftly and steadily into the middle current.

“O, Dick! Dick!” cried Diana, extending one hand, and holding Tom tight with the other, “do get us off!”

Poor Tom, who felt the danger, uttered a piteous squall, and rubbed his nose imploringly on his little mistress.

Neither of the boys could swim, and

there was no boat. Dick remembered with a sickening heart that Will was gone, and that there was no one at home but Patty and Miss Bland.

"She'll be drowned!" said Osborne, turning pale.

"If she is, it's your doing," said Dick, fiercely.

"I'm sure I didn't mean to—" began Osborne.

"Didn't mean to," retorted Dick bitterly, while every moment carried his sister further from shore, "and it's only a mile to the dam. Hold on tight, Di," he shouted, and turning away from Osborne, he rushed up the bank, and into the house.

Osborne went home to tell his father, intending carefully to conceal his own share in the matter. He was more alarmed for the possible consequences to himself, than troubled for Diana's fate,

though he would have been glad enough to hear that she was safe on shore.

“She needn’t have provoked me so,” he thought, trying to excuse himself; “and whoever would have thought of her jumping on that ice and risking her life for an old cat.”

Dick burst into Mrs. Bland’s room, where Patty was saying something about the supper for the party.

“O! Aunt Sophy!” he cried, “Diana is floating down the river on a piece of ice! O, where *is* Will?”

Dick had not expected as much help from his aunt as from Patty. But Patty began to wring her hands and ask questions. Mrs. Bland started to her feet, in one second a transformed woman.

“Hush, Patty!” she said. “Where is the nearest boat?”

In all his distress Dick was amazed at

his aunt's tones. They were so firm, clear, and decided.

"None nearer than the village, aunt."

"Take the pony, ride as fast as you can. Get to the village before the ice does, if possible. Was it solid?"

"Yes, aunt. It was shore ice, half a foot thick."

"Make some one get out a boat; tell them I will give anything to the man who saves her. Do not lose a moment."

Dick sped to the stable, wondering why he had not thought of this plan, the only one. He did not stop to saddle Pick, but flung himself on the pony's back, and set out on a headlong race to the village. The pony was fleet and strong, but glancing at the river Dick could see the ice raft before him, and in its midst a little crouching figure in a scarlet shawl.

As long as he lived Dick never forgot

that ride. The bitterness of remorse was in his heart, and the iron entered into his soul. Why had he broken his word to his brother? Why had he not gone in when Diana called him? Suppose the raft parted before he could reach the town. Suppose no boat was to be had, or the ice went over the dam before one could be found. Frightful misgivings clustered thick and fast. There seemed a hundred chances to one against Diana's life.

With all his anxiety and anguish, he noticed things along the road as he never had before, the outline of the hills, the bare trees against the sky, the brimming, whirling river. He saw in the current the sticks he and Osborne had thrown. How fast they went, though he passed them. He passed, too, that scarlet spot on the grey, angry water. It did not move as he shouted wildly, and a new fear possessed

him. What if Diana were already dead of cold and fright, and he could never tell her how he had loved her all the time? What if when he came back it should be with his little sister dead, the river water dripping from her long curls? What an unselfish, loyal, brave little creature she had been always, only he had never seen it till now, when it was too late. How like her it was to go after the old cat! Dick thought remorsefully even of Tom. "I'll never pull his tail again as long as I live!" said poor Dick, with a choking sob.

Diana would be drowned, he knew she would, and it would be his fault. Could he be the same boy who not more than an hour before had been riding home over this road, careless, light of heart, pleased with himself and with life?

Dick did not pray in words for he could find none, but he prayed in spirit as he

never had before, while Pick dashed forward on his mad gallop.

It was not more than four minutes till he reached the covered bridge, but it seemed to him four hours. He dashed beneath the arch, but reined up, half across, as he saw Mr. Lyon standing and looking out of one of the square windows, which made a picture-frame for the grey winter landscape.

“O, Mr. Lyon!” he cried, as the principal turned toward him; “Diana’s on that piece of ice coming down the river toward the dam! Don’t you see her? O help me to save her! Where’s a boat?”

After all was over, Dick said that he had never seen anything like the swiftness with which Mr. Lyon sped across the bridge, and seized a horse and cutter from an astonished gentleman, just preparing to use it himself.

“Jump in!” he said to Dick, who flung Peck’s rein to the tall man and obeyed.

The horse was a spirited one, and fast they flew up the road to a shanty where lived an Irishman owning a boat.

The ice float was drawing nearer the dam now. Dick could see plainly that it had grown smaller. The water washed across it. It whirled and wavered perilously, as the current grew swifter and swifter. Dick called aloud in an agony, but though Diana answered, the sound was lost in the roar of the river over the dam. Across the water, however, came a shrill and piteous mew, which showed that the old cat was still in the land of the living.

Mr. Lyon looked around for the boat. It was lying on the shore tied to a stake. “Where are the oars?” asked Mr. Lyon, sharply.

“Shure they’re under Pat’s bed and the place is locked,” said a woman, one of the crowd which was fast gathering. “What would you wan’t ’em for?”

Mr. Lyon looked around, caught up an axe which lay near on a pile of drift wood, burst open the door at one blow, whirled out the oars from under the bed, scattering from this retreat four hens and a little black pig, and reappeared on the shore.

“I want a man,” he said, in his ringing tones, “to go out with me and get one of my scholars, this boy’s sister, off that ice before she drowns.”

How bitterly Dick regretted that he did not know how to manage a boat. There were as yet but two men in the crowd assembling about him, for most of those in the neighborhood worked in the great tannery, and the mills below the dam, where the rumor had not yet reached.

Both the men present hung back, for there was imminent danger that the boat would be swept over the fall.

“Take me, sir!” cried Matthew Wells, springing forward; “I can manage a boat first rate! I can indeed, sir!”

Mr. Lyon looked at him one moment. “Come!” he said.

The next instant the boat was out in the current, heading for the middle stream, down which Diana was now drifting with fearful rapidity. She sat crouched in the middle of the frail raft, her head lowered, seemingly heedless of the efforts making for her rescue.

Now came running up a crowd of workmen from the mills, eager to know the state of the case. A dozen women told the story, and pointed out the child.

“Was ever such a set of tarnation fools!” cried one giant in a red shirt.

“Couldn’t *none* of you have the sense to call us? Who’s that in the boat?”

“The school teacher and a boy.”

“*A boy!*” retorted the man, with an unspeakable emphasis. “Pretty fellows you are,” he said, to the two men who had hung back. “It’s boy’s work to fight that current now, ain’t it?”

“An indade you may say that same,” said another. “Dennis McEvoy, what do ye mane to be standin’ here settin’ still at your aze, prarrein’ about like a paycock, like a baste as ye ar’, an let the innocent be drowned for want of a man!”

“Shure my life’s worth as much as another’s.”

“Faix, an it aint then.”

“Hold your tongues!” said the tall man in the red shirt commandingly. “Somebody get out Piper’s boat with me and go after them, or they’ll be swept over the

dam yet. That little professor's got more grit than muscle I guess," and he sprang down the bank followed by two of his companions.

"Is it your sister, dear?" asked a sympathizing woman of Dick, who stood with straining eyes watching the progress of the boat as it fought against the stream.

"Yes. Don't talk to me!" said Dick. "O, God! my God! take my life, but spare hers!" he said to himself. He did not heed that John stood beside him, holding his hand hard and fast. In the midst of all his sickening anxiety and suspense, John was half envying Matthew Wells, and wishing he could "just have had his chance."

There was a jingle of bells, a sleigh stopped in the midst of the crowd. "What's the matter here?" asked the Major's voice.

No one answered; a whisper ran through the assembly that the lady and gentleman in the sleigh were the child's brother and sister. The silence with which their questions were met, the looks of sympathy turned on them, told the Major and Anne that they were someway concerned in the matter. Anne turned very white.

"There's a little girl on a bit of ice out in the river, sir," said a man. "There's two boats out after her as you can see if you stand up, but it's a hard fight."

"The Lord have mercy!" cried Simeon. "It's our Miss Diana."

Anne gave a half stifled cry, and springing from her seat, hurried to the very edge of the bank, the crowd making way for her and for Will. Neither of them saw Dick, who was lower down.

In the meantime Mr. Lyon, rowing with swift telling strokes, had reached the

— and then —

middle current, toward which Matthew steadily steered, undismayed by the near-
ing roar of the fall. In spite of all they
could do, however, the river swept them
onward.

Down, down directly in their path came
the ice raft, now crumbling fast, threaten-
ing every moment to part, and let fall its
burden into the dark, swirling water. On
it came directly in the way of the boat—
Mr. Lyon dropped his oars and leaned
forward. He caught Diana's dress in both
hands, the next instant the cake of ice
tipped, parted, and plunged her into the
water. But Mr. Lyon held her fast, and
the next moment she was in the boat,
half insensible, but still clinging fast to the
old cat.

Cheer upon cheer broke from the spec-
tators on shore, and they were answered
from the water as the three men in Piper's

boat, dashing downward with the stream, flung a rope to Mr. Lyon, and rowed slowly to shore, fighting the current every inch of the way.

"You are quite safe, ma'am, quite safe," said Mr. Lyon, wrapping up Diana tenderly in his own coat, and wringing the water from her dress and hair.

"My pussy!" were Diana's first words.

"Here, all right," said Matthew, putting Tom into her arms, where he lay shivering with cold and wet.

"I am so glad it was you, sir," murmured Diana. "I thought I should be drowned, and never come to school any more. And Matthew, too; I'm so tired, I can't say all I mean!" said Diana, looking up into the boy's face. "But it was so good of you."

"No it *wa'nt*," said Matthew, gruffly. "Here we are."

They reached the shore, and then and there, before all the people, Anne Monroe threw her arms round Mr. Lyon's neck and kissed him.

"Good for you, Professor," said the big man in the red shirt.

"But," as John remarked afterwards, "the principal didn't act as if he thought it was bad to take."

"Major Monroe," said Mr. Lyon, cutting short Will's thanks, "I couldn't have done it but for this boy. This is Master Matthew Wells, I am proud of him. He is a credit to the school. Shake hands, Wells."

Poor Matthew! He had never been thought a credit to any one before. He colored scarlet with mingled shyness and pleasure.

"I wa'nt goin' to let little Di Monroe drown, not if I could help it," he said,

—
kicking up the gravel with one foot, and then he ran away as if he had been disgracing himself.

John ran after him and caught him by the hand.

“O, Mat,” he said, “look here ! I want you to take my claws ; *do* take my claws !” and seeing that he was not understood he added, “my grizzly’s claws that father sent me. I say, you’re a regular fine fellow.”

Matthew obstinately refused the offered claws, but from that hour he took a turn for the better in school and out.

Diana was borne up the bank in a sort of triumphal procession, and into the nearest house, where the bustling mistress soon provided her with a change of her own daughter’s clothes, and the hottest possible drink.

Diana seemed confused and bewildered

with the fright and suffering. It was not till Mr. Leslie, who had been summoned, proposed that they should go to the parsonage, as nearer than Mrs. Bland's, that she seemed to wake up. Then she begged so earnestly to go home to Aunt Sophy that Will could not cross her.

In the mean time the "Pat" to whom the boat belonged had come home. He made light of the smashing of his door, and expressed himself delighted that the boat had been used, especially as the Major gave him enough to pay for a dozen doors.

"There!" he said to a more thrifty neighbor, "look at it now! ye've always driving at me about laving the axe out doors, and where would the young lady be now if I hadn't?"

"Dick," whispered Diana, too low for any one but himself to hear as he bent

over her kissing her again and again, "Dick I'll never tell."

"See here, Dick," said Will that instant, as he lifted Diana to carry her out to the sleigh; "I wish you'd ride up and ask Dr. Porter to come and see Di. I presume she is well enough now, but still Anne would rather he saw her."

"The cat? Yes, my darling, here he is; but it was hardly worth while to risk your life for him."

"I didn't think anything about that," said Diana, with equal truth and simplicity.

The Major and Anne, from their sister's confused account, were under the impression that she and Tom had gone down to the river alone, and that jumping on the cake of ice had been Tom's own act; for of Osborne, Diana had not said a word.

"I want to tell you about it, Will," began Dick.

“Never mind now, my boy. We have her safe, thank God; and the first thing is to get her home. You can tell us all about it afterwards. To think what we owe Mr. Lyon and your school mate! I want to see those three men that went out in the other boat. My friends,” said Will, as he met them at the door, “I wish there was anything I could do or say to show how much we all thank you.”

“Bless you, Major! that wa’n’t nothing to make a fuss about,” said the big man. “We’ve all been raftsmen, and a little water more or less don’t count in these parts; but if that little professor aint some, I wouldn’t say so! My boy’s always wanted to go to the ’cademy and I’ve thought it all nonsense, but I’ll send him when the next term opens, you bet!”

And sure enough the boy went.



CHAPTER XI.

A CONFESSION.

THE old horses had never gone home as swiftly as they did that evening. Mrs. Bland came out to meet the party, pale and anxious, but perfectly calm and collected. To Anne's surprise she wasted no time in questions.

"Thank God!" she said, "the dear child is safe. Anne, love, you'd better take her right up-stairs and put her to bed; I've had a good fire made in your room, and the bed warmed. Diana, darling, how do you feel?"

"O, Aunt Sophy! Aunt Sophy!" half

sobbed Diana, "I thought I should never see you again. The old cat is all safe, Patty. Please give him some warm milk."

Patty embraced Diana and the cat alternately. Tom, who had somewhat recovered his spirits, purred effusively on finding himself at home, and went up-stairs with the procession attending Diana, twisting herself round every one's feet, and nearly tripping the Major as he carried his little sister.

"It showed great presence of mind in Dick to ride down to the village as he did," said Will to Anne.

"Laws, Major Monroe!" said Patty, "'twasn't Master Dick thought of riding down to the village; it was missis. She sent him off flying, and told him to get the boat and all."

Will and Anne looked at each other in surprise.

“You see, I couldn’t think of anything else to do, Will,” said Mrs. Bland. “If you had been at home, you know, I should have asked you.”

“It was the only thing to do, Aunt Sophy; but I should have thought you would have been so startled.”

“I was, dear; but, you see, if I had cried, or fainted, or anything, there would have been no one to tell Dick what to do; and he was so frightened, poor boy! no wonder! Do you really think I did what was right?”

“Indeed I do, dear!” said Will, taking his aunt into his arms and kissing her, as he consigned Diana to Anne’s care.

“I’m so glad you do, dear,” said Mrs. Bland in her soft tones. “Because my husband always said I had more sense than people thought, and it pleases me to have you agree with him, you know.”

“I tell you what, Miss Anne,” said Patty, in an aside, as Will went downstairs, “folks generally don’t know what missis’ got in her. If she could live all the time in a house on fire or an earthquake, she’d be an uncommon smart woman.”

Dr. Porter lived quite at the other end of the town; and, when Dick had left his message, and turned Pick’s head toward home, it was dark. Dick’s mind was in a tumult with sensations of mingled terror and thankfulness. Only one idea came clearly before him, and that was the firm resolution to tell Will the whole story, and let him do whatever he thought fit.

Half way toward home he again met Osborne Briggs.

“So your sister’s safe after all!” he cried out; “and there’s no harm done.”

“No harm!” said Dick, bitterly. “Look here, Osborne, I tell you straight out—I’ve had enough of this. My brother told me to have no more to do with you, and I gave him my word. I didn’t keep it, more shame for me, but I’m going to after this.”

“Dick Monroe, if you go and tell of me in this matter, you’ll be sorry the last day you live. We may just as well keep it a secret. I didn’t mean any harm, you know I didn’t; and, I dare say, Diana won’t tell if you ask her not. But, if you let any one know how it was, I’ll go and tell your aunt every word you said about her, and then she won’t leave you any of her money. She’s an old woman now, and I should think you’d want to keep on the blind side of her.”

The idea of calculating on his aunt’s

death had never entered Dick's mind. He was utterly disgusted. If anything had been wanting to confirm his resolution, Osborne's speech would have done it.

He drew himself up with something of his brother's manner.

"I shall save you the trouble," he said, trying hard to be cool, and looking Osborne straight in the face. "I shall tell my aunt and my brother the whole. I shall not blame you for this afternoon's work as much as I do myself; for, being in your company, I have been driven and led by you long enough. Let me pass, if you please."

He drew the bridle from Osborne's hand, struck the pony with the riding whip, and went forward at a sharp pace.

"I'll do it now," said Dick, "if I die for it." He thought of the conclusion of John's essay, and smiled to himself.

“If a person’s got a hard thing to do, the best way is to go at it and stick to it.”

“I will,” said Dick, resolutely.

He rode into the barn yard, threw the rein to Primus, and walked into the house as if he were charging a battery.

“’Pears to me,” said Primus to his father, “Master Dick’s made up his mind dreadful hard to something.”

Simeon shook his head in an oracular manner, and looked very wise and mysterious.

“Do you know anything about it?” asked Primus.

Simeon shook his head more solemnly than before, and looked wiser than ever, giving the idea that there was a profound mystery, and he could unfold it if he chose, but he spoke no word.

— and then —

"I don't believe he knows any more about it than I do," said Primus to himself. He was quite right, but Simeon would never say "I don't know" to his son. It was his way of keeping up his authority and dignity.

In the meantime Dick went into the house, and walked straight into his aunt's room, where she was sitting with the Major.

"Will," he said, without a word of preface, "it was all my fault that Diana was almost drowned."

"Your fault!" said Will, surprised. "I thought she went on the ice after the cat."

"She did; but it was Osborne Briggs pulled the cat from her, and threw him on."

"Were you with Osborne?" asked Will, changing his tone.

Yes, sir; I was down at the river-side with him, and Diana came to call me in."

"Indeed!" said the Major, with gathering wrath. "I thought I had your word about that matter."

"You did, but he met me and came home with me this afternoon, and I was afraid to let him know what you told me."

"Afraid of what? Dick, don't make me quite ashamed of you."

"I expect you will be before I get through," said Dick, in the same quiet, resolute tone; "but I'm going to tell you all about it now, whatever happens."

There was something in Dick's voice and manner which made Will respect him in spite of his vexation. He said, more calmly, "Go on."

"I was afraid of him," recommenced

Dick, "because he said if I didn't go with him, he'd come up here and tell you all how mean I had been to make fun of Aunt Sophy, and mimic her, and talk about her as if she hadn't common sense."

"My dear!" said Mrs. Bland. "But I'm sure you didn't mean any harm."

Dick went on, pale and determined.

"I talked very badly, and I took off her ways and her talk to make Osborne laugh. I did it ever so many times. I thought that was smart," added Dick, bitterly, "and I was afraid and ashamed to have you know it, so I broke my word, and told a lie. I wouldn't come in when Diana called me, because Osborne laughed at me, and made me jealous of her, knowing about the procession of Bacchus when I didn't. So that's all. I don't know what I deserve. You may give me what

you like, Will. I sha'n't say a word to excuse myself—only Di hadn't better know, because she'll be worried."

"I can't believe it of you," said Will. "I can't think my father's son would be so mean, after all aunt's kindness."

"O! but I am sure Dick meant no harm," said Mrs. Bland, patting Dick's hand affectionately.

"O, Aunt Sophy!" said Dick, with a little quiver in his voice for the first time; "if you wouldn't be so kind! If you'd just box my ears, I'd thank you."

"My love, I couldn't," said Mrs. Bland. "I couldn't box the kitten when she got upon the table and licked the butter, and I am sure that is worse than anything you have done."

"But you don't know how bad I've been, Aunt Sophy. I said you were a perfect fool."

“Well, my dear,” said Mrs. Bland, placidly, “most people think so.”

“O, aunt!”

“And dear Di is quite safe, and I am sure, Dick, you were not by when that naughty boy threw poor pussy on the ice.”

“No, not close by. I had run up on the bank for a stick. If I’d been down there I should have prevented it. But I don’t know,” said Dick, who had a most intense contempt for his own conduct, “maybe I’d have let the poor thing drown for fear of his telling you. I was such a miserable coward.”

“But you’re sorry now; I’m sure you are,” said Mrs. Bland, pitying him.

“Sorry! You might say so; you’ll never trust me again, Aunt Sophy, I’m not worth it; I wonder I haven’t stolen the spoons. I really do,” said poor Dick. “I

suppose I should if Osborne had told me."

"O, no, my dear, I'm sure you would not."

"Can you ever forgive me, aunt?"

"Of course, my dear," said Mrs. Bland, kissing him, "and Will does, too, I am sure," and she looked imploringly at the Major, who said not a word.

He was very much provoked. He could not help feeling some contempt for his brother, and made little allowance for the boy's temptations and difficulties. Dick's falseness to his word had very nearly been the cause of Diana's death, and he did not know how to excuse him. "Upon my word," he said, "I never knew a boy in my life that I thought deserved a flogging more than you do."

"I know that as well as you," said Dick; "if you are ready, I am."

Mrs. Bland burst into tears and held Dick's hand tight. "I can't have it, I cannot, Will," she sobbed. "Indeed, indeed, I can't. It would kill me to have such a thing in the house."

"We can go to the barn," said Dick, smiling.

"Indeed, indeed!" repeated Mrs. Bland, "dear Dick did not mean any harm, I am sure he didn't."

"Aunt Sophy," said Will, "nine-tenths of the mischief in the world is done by people who don't mean any harm. I do not know what else to do; I have talked to Dick before about letting this boy alone, once after he just missed shooting Anne, and once beside, he knows when. Then he promised me he never would have anything more to do with him. He has disobeyed me, and broken his word of honor. Nothing that I have said seems to have

affected him in the least. I don't see but what I must do something; I should not feel justified in passing it over."

Mrs. Bland rose and threw herself into Will's arms. "But, indeed, you must not punish Dick," she said, kissing him. "It's almost Christmas time, and dear Diana is safe and the pussy too, and really how could he tell Osborne to go home? I couldn't have done it myself. Please, Will."

"Very well, Aunt Sophy, since you wish it," said the Major, who had never struck his brother in his life, and was perhaps not very sorry to avoid the threatened punishment. "Go to bed, Dick, I don't wish to say anything more about it at present. I certainly never expected to think of you as I cannot help doing now," and the Major turned short round and left the room.

Dick went up stairs miserably unhappy, but his trouble had not the sting in it which it would have had before his confession. The bitterest part of his sorrow was the feeling that he had lost entirely his brother's respect and confidence. Anne heard the story when she came down toward nine o'clock. She did not blame Dick as severely as did his brother, and thought that Will had not made sufficient allowance for the boy's perplexities and temptations, so far as the late meeting with Osborne was concerned, or appreciated the effort his confession had cost him.

Mrs. Bland left them talking together, and stole softly up stairs with some sandwiches and a glass of whipped cream. She found them herself, without asking Patty, for Patty having some way learned the story was inclined to be very hard upon Dick. Mrs. Bland had not been up

stairs for six months before this eventful day. She listened for a moment outside Dick's door, and heard a sob.

"The poor, dear child!" said Aunt Sophy to herself, as she turned the handle and entered softly.

"My love," she said, sitting down by the bed and kissing poor Dick's averted face, "I've brought you some supper."

"I can't eat anything, Aunt Sophy, thank you," said Dick, with a choking voice.

"Dear Diana is fast asleep, with pussy in the bed beside her, and Dr. Porter thinks she will take no harm."

"It's no thanks to me that she's not in the bottom of the river."

"My love, I think you blame yourself too much, indeed I do! How long ago did all this happen?"

"Before Will came home; and I did

other things, Aunt Sophy. I read books I had no business to touch, and hid them away; and Will found it out and forgave me, and I gave him my word then I'd never have anything more to do with Osborne, and I've broken it, and that's what makes him so angry with me."

"But how could you help it, dear, when he followed you home?" said Mrs. Bland, coaxing him.

"Don't excuse me, Aunt Sophy, don't. I could have got rid of him easily enough if I'd been a mind to, but he said he'd come up and tell you all how I talked, and I felt so awful ashamed to have any one know."

"But, Dick, I should not have cared much if he had. Boys will amuse themselves, I know."

"Pretty amusement!" said Dick, bitterly, "and I've been ashamed to look you in



the face whenever I've thought of it, and yet I do love you, Aunt Sophy, indeed I do."

Mrs. Bland tried to feed him whipped cream with the spoon, like a baby, but Dick was too miserable to eat. His aunt began to cry, for she thought a boy who couldn't eat whipped cream must be in a dreadful state of mind indeed.

"Don't, aunt," said Dick, "don't mind anything about me. I've made every one miserable enough, without your crying," and Dick tried to speak in a very steady voice and broke down entirely. "It wasn't because I was afraid of catching what I deserved," he said, "I don't want you to think I was such a coward, but I couldn't bear Will should know how mean I had been. And this afternoon when I was coming home, the most I cared about being perfect for the quarter, was because

I thought he'd be so pleased, and now he won't mind anything about it, and he's going away so soon. O! what shall I do! What shall I do!"

Mrs. Bland heard the Major's step on the stair, and she opened the door and called to him. He came rather reluctantly. "See here, Will," said Mrs. Bland, softly, putting her hand on his shoulder, "you must be kind to Dick, I am sure you will. He is so unhappy, and all his trouble is that you are displeased with him."

"I don't mean to be unkind, Aunt Sophy," said Will, who was almost as unhappy as Dick. "I am displeased and disappointed with him, and I can not help it, I shall not know how to trust him again; I am as sorry as he can be to say so, but it is the truth. All I want is to do my duty in the matter."

"But I don't want you to do your duty,"

urged Mrs. Bland; "I want you to kiss and be friends. Indeed, Will, you can't manage your brother just as if you were his father," added Mrs Bland, sensibly enough.

"He can if he likes, Aunt Sophy," said Dick.

"And I know Anne thinks just as I do," pursued Mrs Bland, "and she knows, I am sure. Only see how clever she is, with her Latin and crochet work and all. And it's most Christmas time, and dear Diana will be distressed if Dick and you are not good friends, and so shall I; and there, Mr. Lyon says he has been perfect for the quarter."

"Will won't care to hear anything about that now," said Dick, hiding his face in the pillow.

"How do you know that?" said the Major, with some emotion.

"And he is so sorry, and I'm sure it

says in the Bible that people ought to be forgiven when they are sorry, really. And Monday is Christmas. Come, Will, now *do* kiss and be friends," concluded Mrs Bland, as though talking to two little children.

"Well, Dick," said the Major, setting down on the bed, and bending over his brother, "let's make it all up, and never quarrel any more, like good little boys. Shall we? Come, let's do as Aunt Sophy says, kiss and be friends."

"O, Will!" said Dick, brokenly.

Mrs. Bland slipped out of the room and left the brothers together. She found Anne down stairs, anxious, troubled, half-crying.

"I'm sure I don't know what to do, aunt," said poor Anne, who was miserable at not being able to agree with Will entirely, "but it does seem to me as if

Will did not make allowance enough for Dick."

"It's all right now," said Mrs. Bland, settling herself in her easy chair; "I called Will into Dick's room, and they have made it all up."

"O, thank you, Aunt Sophy. How glad I am!"

"I thought you would be, dear. Do you know it seems to me such a fortunate thing that your brother isn't at all like the young man in the story book you read to me."

"Why?"

"Because that young man had 'an inflexible will,' you know, and was always ordering the ladies of his family about, and never would do what he was asked. Of course, he was a very good young man, and all that, but I think he would have been a very un-

comfortable person to live with. Will is a great deal nicer; for he is very apt to do what one asks him, and I do like people who do as they are asked—when it's nothing wrong, you know, of course."

The next day Diana kept her bed; but she was a sturdy little body, and the fright and the wetting seemed to have left nothing behind them but a little hoarseness. Sunday she came down to dinner, and by Monday all thoughts of postponing the party were given up.

Major Monroe and Anne sent Mr. Lyon their father's Elzevir Virgil for a Christmas gift, and Mrs. Bland, hearing Matthew's share in the adventure, insisted on giving him a watch. For the next two weeks Matthew was perpetually wanting to know and tell the time of day.

The party went off in the most delightful manner. Mr. Lyon made himself most agreeable, and whisked about, John said, like a streak of tame lightning.

The supper was admirable, and the guests and the hosts pleased with each other, and with themselves.

“Will,” said Dick to his brother, as they stood together by the parlor fire, after the last good-night had been said, “how different all this would have been if that cake of ice had parted five minutes sooner!”

“I can’t bear to think of that,” said the Major. “It seems like a miracle that the child was saved. I don’t know how to be thankful enough.”

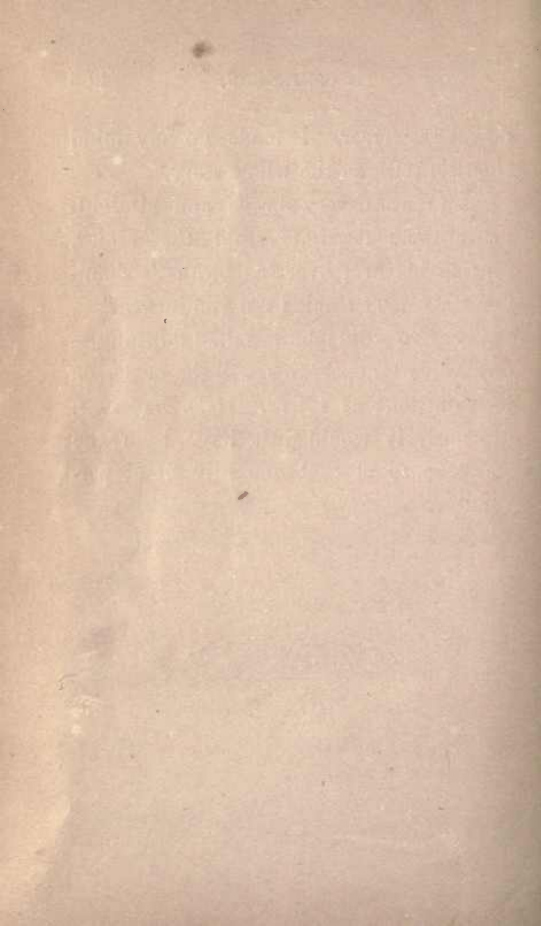
“Nor I. Di says she felt sure almost all the time that God would save her, but I didn’t when I was on my way

down the river. I made up my mind then I'd tell you the whole story."

"You were very brave and straightforward about that," said the Major, putting his arm over his brother's shoulder. "I don't think I did you justice."

"Yes you did; but, Will, I do think—any way I hope—this will be a lesson to me as long as I live. If Di had been drowned, it would just have been the consequence of that one silly fit of perversity."







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